

MILITARY

Brigadier general to oversee 3 Army brigades in Europe
Page 2



BASEBALL

Hall of Fame inductees express joy, gratitude in emotional ceremony
Back page

MILITARY

3M to pay \$9.1M over defective combat earplugs
Page 4



Report: Marines lead all services in binge drinking, sex partners » **Page 5**

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A CHANGE IN VISION

Navy tightens qualifications for surface warfare officers to improve watch-standing skills

Page 4

Seaman Jacob Allen stands watch aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln in the Atlantic Ocean on July 25.

MAXWELL ANDERSON/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Trump's promised White House veterans hotline based in W.Va.

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

SHEPHERDSTOWN, W.Va. — A Department of Veterans Affairs facility sits unassuming, behind a hotel in a small, riverside town on the eastern panhandle of West Virginia. The single-story, brick building is nondescript except for a sign indicating the doors for VA deliveries.

Inside, visitors are passed badges through a slot in a window before entering through a second set of doors. One main room, separated from smaller offices by a large glass wall, houses a few dozen cubicles, each with just enough space for a phone and a desktop computer.

When veterans pick up the phone to dial the new White House veterans hotline, this is where their calls go.

President Donald Trump vowed two years ago to create a White House hotline for veterans, promising them attention and action from the highest levels of government. He portrayed the hotline as a direct connection to the Oval Office and even indicated he might field a few calls.

A hotline was established, but its connection to the White House is in name only. The operation is located in Shepherdstown, about 70 miles northwest of Washington, and phones are answered by VA employees — not White House staff.

SEE HOTLINE ON PAGE 6



NIKKI WENTLING/Stars and Stripes

This building on the campus of a Clarion Hotel in Shepherdstown, W.Va., is now home to the White House VA Hotline.

MILITARY

Oversight of 3 Europe-based Army brigades shifted

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — U.S. Army Europe will put a one-star general in charge of three brigades permanently stationed on the continent as part of a command reorganization designed to improve combat readiness.

The effort, known as “mission command restructuring,” means the 7th Army Training Command in Grafenwoehr will assume oversight of the Vicenza, Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade; the Katterbach, Germany-based 12th Combat Aviation Brigade; and the Vilseck, Germany-based 2nd Cavalry Regiment, which is structured as a Stryker brigade.

The change takes effect Wednesday, when all three brigades begin reporting to Brig. Gen. Christopher LaNeve, whose Grafen-

woehr headquarters is taking on higher level responsibilities, USAREUR said.

“U.S. Army Europe is realigning command relationships for optimal readiness and effectiveness,” USAREUR said in a statement.

Until now, management of the Army’s Europe-based brigades was left to USAREUR’s three-star boss.

The shift means USAREUR headquarters can now dedicate more resources to strategy while allowing the 7th Army Training Command to deal with tactical issues it is better designed to oversee, USAREUR said.

The headquarters realignment is the latest way in which the Army’s mission in Europe is adapting to a more unpredictable security environment.

Since Russia’s 2014 intervention in

Ukraine, U.S. European Command’s operations have expanded, particularly along NATO’s eastern flank, as allies attempt to deter potential aggression.

USAREUR has been at the center of those efforts as it manages large rotations of U.S.-based units flowing into Europe and more missions for the forces permanently posted to Europe.

However, as the missions grew, USAREUR headquarters found itself undermanned and not configured for the more intense pace of operations.

In 2015, a Army Mission Command Element was set up to manage the day-to-day movement of troops in the Baltics and Poland. That headquarters, currently manned by soldiers on rotations with the 1st Infantry Division, now operates out of Poznan, Poland, giving USAREUR a deployable

headquarters it lacked after post-Cold War cutbacks.

As the Army downsized, it lost not only brigades but the higher headquarters that helped manage them. The inactivation of V Corps in 2013 left the Army without a corps headquarters for the first time since 1951.

With the 7th ATC now established as the brigade-level higher headquarters, those units will fall “under a more appropriate level of administrative authority to assist them in meeting their training and readiness requirements,” USAREUR said.

“The Mission Command Restructuring is being conducted to improve the effectiveness of U.S. Army Europe as a headquarters and the readiness of the affected brigades,” USAREUR said.

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US wraps up minesweeping drills with India and Japan

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — U.S. and Japanese minesweepers and Indian bomb-disposal experts have been drilling this month on skills they’d need to clear mines from Pacific shipping lanes dur-

ing wartime.

The Avenger-class minesweeper USS Chief, along with 19 Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force ships and explosives ordnance disposal observers from India, honed their skills in Mutsu Bay, Japan, during Mine Countermeasures Exercise 2JA 2018, which began July 18 and wrapped up Monday.

“The Indo-Pacific region is a very large and complex area with large amounts of maritime trade,” Capt. Adrian Ragland, the commodore of the Sasebo-based Mine Countermeasures Squadron 7, told Stars and Stripes in an email.

“Sea mines in this region threaten both security and commercial interests throughout the world,” he said. “It is important that we and our regional partners remain proficient to respond to threats at

a moment’s notice.”

Mines are difficult and time-consuming to counter and affect the security and commerce of every nation, Ragland said.

“It is important that we can bring as many assets to the fight as possible and can work closely with our partner nations to rapidly and efficiently counter sea mines wherever they might be employed,” he said.

Iraqi mines damaged two U.S. ships — the USS Princeton and the USS Tripoli — in the Persian Gulf on Feb. 18, 1991. It took eight nations to ensure the area was safe for ships after the war.

More recently, the threat of mines in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen has prompted international minesweeping efforts.

The exercise in Japan culminat-



USS Chief commander Lt. Cmdr. William Russell, pointing, explains the ship’s sonar capabilities to Lt. Cmdr. Akihiko Morita, right, of Japan, on July 23.

ANDREW HOLMES
Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

ed with U.S. and Japanese ships clearing a route through a simulated underwater minefield.

Earlier, sailors practiced finding mines with sonar equipment while the explosive ordnance disposal personnel worked on neutralizing them.

“At every opportunity (we) reaffirm our commitment and relationships with partner nations,” Ragland said. “We do not waste any opportunity to learn from each other.”

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Correction

A July 30 article about the 100th anniversary of a World War I offensive should have identified U.S. Maj. Gen. Steve Ferrari as the 42nd Infantry Division commander.

TODAY IN STRIPES

American Roundup	16
Business	20
Classified	19, 23
Comics/Crossword	22
Faces	17
Opinion	14-15
Shifting Gears	18
Sports	25-32
Weather	20

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MILITARY

Show of force



WYATT OLSON/Stars and Stripes

Amphibious assault craft approach Pyramid Rock Beach at Marine Corps Base Hawaii during a Rim of the Pacific drill Sunday.

Troops storm Hawaii beach in Rim of the Pacific's amphibious exercise finale

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS BASE HAWAII — Troops from 11 nations on Sunday conducted the final and largest of four amphibious drills here as the monthlong Rim of the Pacific exercise nears its end.

Twenty-one amphibious assault vehicles carrying 306 troops bounded across whitecaps on Oahu's Kaneohe Bay toward a sandy beach near the iconic Pyramid Rock on the coast of Marine Corps Base Hawaii. The attack was supported by ships, helicopters, fighter jets and a drone.

The assault marks the final flight for the RQ-7B Shadow drone used at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay since 2008.

The mock attack was commanded by RIMPAC's Marine Air Ground Task Force-Hawaii, which is composed of more than 2,800 Marines and sailors and foreign military personnel from Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Chile, Philippines and Tonga.

"We've been fighting a notional war scenario the last five days," said Col. Michael Styskal, commander of MAGTF-Hawaii, after the 90-minute assault. "We came on this beach to seize an airfield. This culminates the actions of the amphibious force."

Styskal said there were "no real hiccups" in the assault, which was launched from Australia's HMAS Adelaide and Indonesia's KRI Makassar.

Twenty-five nations, 46 ships, five submarines and about 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel are participating in the biennial RIMPAC, which ends Thursday. First held in 1971, it is the world's largest international maritime exercise and includes major drills on disaster relief, medical assistance and warfighting.

RIMPAC 2018's amphibious portion has not been larger than in previous years, but it has been "a little bit more flexible," Styskal said.

"Three days ago, we executed operations off of Kauai, and then within overnight we were executing operations on Bellows Beach (on Oahu)," he said. "That was within a 24-hour period. We can lift and shift our assets fairly quickly, as opposed to a strict land force where you can't be as flexible. So this exercise really demonstrated flexibility and



ADAM MONTERA/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

A Malaysian marine provides security.

the inherent utility we have through a combined force."

The Shadow drone provided reconnaissance, surveillance and target acquisition to MAGTF-Hawaii before and during the assault.

The Shadow was operated by Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 3, or VMU-3, part of Marine Aircraft Group 24 based at Marine Corps Air Station Kaneohe Bay. VMU-3 has flown it more than 18,000 hours in the past 10 years.

VMU-3 will begin using the newer RQ-21A Blackjack drone later this year, joining the air station's other two VMUs that have already made that transition. Unlike its predecessor, the Blackjack can be launched from a ship.

Two CH-53E Super Stallions shuttled 48 American, Chilean and South Korean troops to the landing zone to conduct follow-on operations.

Another Super Stallion carried a 9,000-pound howitzer cannon to the captured beachhead. Several F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets shot through the sky above the beach in a loud show of force.

"This is my fifth RIMPAC," said Commodore Craig Heap, who commands Australia's RIMPAC forces and was also the air-component commander in Sunday's assault.

He said that as the exercise has continued to increase the number of nations participating, the dimensions of RIMPAC have also expanded, particularly "a clear, classical warfighting piece at sea."

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WYATT OLSON/Stars and Stripes

A Marine Corps Super Stallion lands aboard the HMAS Adelaide.



ADAM MONTERA/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

Malaysians and U.S. Marines push toward an objective on Pyramid Rock Beach.

MILITARY

Navy tightens qualifications to become SWO

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

The Navy is clamping down on who can become a surface warfare officer — a move aimed at boosting focus on bridge watch-standing opportunities for future warship commanders.

Effective immediately, sailors pursuing SWO certification must be commissioned line officers qualified to command warfighting units or be making a lateral transfer into the field, according to a Navy instruction issued July 23.

The change — which restricts limited-duty officers, chief warrant officers and senior enlisted sailors from becoming SWOs — comes after ineffective watch-standing was found to be partly to blame for separate collisions last year that killed 17 sailors on the destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS John S. McCain.

It also “aligns with new career path revisions, which focuses on increased experience on ships, including increased bridge watch-standing opportunities for SWOs,” said a Navy statement about the new instruction.

“The surface warfare officer qualification ... is the crucible of a junior professional surface warfare officer to develop and master the core competencies necessary to excel as a future commanding officer of a warship,” Vice Adm. Richard Brown, commander of Naval Surface Forces and Naval Surface Force U.S. Pacific Fleet, said in the statement.

Because watch-standing is part of the SWO certification process, allowing only those in line to be-



DEVIN M. LANDER/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Ensign Amanda Skinner listens for repeat-backs from the bridge as the guided-missile destroyer USS Dewey conducts a replenishment-at-sea operation on July 16. Requirements for sailors pursuing surface warfare officer certification have been made more rigid by the Navy.

come warship commanders to earn the certification will divert more watch-standing opportunities to them, Brown said in a U.S. Naval Institute article published Thursday.

“What we are really going after is increased at-sea experience

in ships. Part of increasing that experience is getting the reps and sets in the pilothouse driving ships,” he told USNI. “If you have other designators ... competing for time in the pilothouse to earn their OOD letter — which is the prerequisite for SWO qual-

ifications — then that really goes against what I’m trying to do in the surface force.”

Those who do not meet the new qualification but were already pursuing SWO certification will be allowed to continue doing so until Oct. 1, the Navy statement

said.

The service’s instruction also says that only those permanently assigned to a vessel may receive SWO designation from that ship’s commander.

“Once SWO qualification is achieved, transfer from one ship to another will not require requalification as a SWO or revalidation of the entire SWO (Personnel Qualification Standards) package,” the statement said. “However, requalification in all applicable watchstations is required.”

Many sailors standing watch during the McCain’s fatal Aug. 21 collision near Singapore were on temporary duty from guided-missile cruisers, which have different controls than destroyers. This was found to be a contributing factor in the collision, according to the Navy’s report on the incident.

Also included in the changes to SWO certification is the elimination of a time limit to attain SWO pins. However, “open communication with [Navy Personnel Command] is required if a qualification is expected to take longer than the first division officer tour,” the statement said.

The service said the changes were made to “develop the most experienced and capable commanding officers who are specialists in five areas: seamanship; navigation and shiphandling; combat systems; engineering; command and program management and administration; and leadership.”

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Contractor to pay \$9.1M for selling defective earplugs used by troops

By WILL MORRIS

Stars and Stripes

A contractor has agreed to pay \$9.1 million to the U.S. government for selling defective earplugs issued to thousands of servicemembers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan from 2003 to 2015.

Known as “selective attenuation earplugs,” 3M’s Combat Arms earplugs would “loosen in the wearers ear, imperceptibly to the wearer and even trained audiologists visually observing a wearer, thereby permitting damaging sounds to enter the ear canal by traveling around outside of the earplug,” according to the whistleblower lawsuit complaint, which was settled Thursday.

The earplugs were designed to be worn in two ways. The wearer could insert the plugs one way if they needed to hear speech and another way if they needed greater noise protection. The plugs looked like two inverted cones connected at each bottom by a



These Combat Arms earplugs are manufactured by Aearo Technologies and sold by 3M.

stem.

The stem was too short, which did not allow the earplugs to go deep enough into the ear, the complaint stated.

The earplugs were originally manufactured by Aearo Technologies, which was acquired by 3M in 2008. Aearo was aware of the plug’s defects as early as 2000, many years before it and 3M became the exclusive provider of selective attenuation earplugs to the military, according to the

lawsuit.

The complaint alleged that 3M and Aearo Technologies manipulated test results to make it appear that the plugs met government standards.

“In addition to damages directly associated with the contractual cost of the earplugs,” the complaint stated, “The United States has been damaged by the large and ongoing medical costs associated with treating veterans who likely suffered hearing damage and impairment as a result of the defective earplugs.”

Tinnitus and hearing loss are the Department of Veterans Affairs’ two most prevalent service-related disabilities, with 1,610,911 and 1,084,069 cases annually, according to the 2016 Annual Benefits Report issued by the Veterans Benefits Administration.

The whistleblower lawsuit was brought by Moldex-Metric Inc., a 3M competitor, in May 2016 under the False Claims Act. The act permits private parties to sue on behalf of the government



DEBBRA SANDERS/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Spc. Coca Temoanui, with the 311th Signal Command, puts in ear protection in 2012. 3M has agreed to pay a \$9.1 million settlement for selling defective earplugs to the military.

in cases of fraud. As part of the settlement, Moldex-Metric will receive \$1.9 million.

“Today’s settlement will ensure that those who do business with the government know that their actions will not go unnoticed,” said Frank Robey, director of the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command’s major procure-

ment fraud unit. “Properly made safety equipment, for use by our [soldiers], is vital to our military’s readiness.”

“Our agents will respond robustly to protect the safety of our military.”

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MILITARY

Report: Marines lead all services in binge drinking

By ANDREW DYER

The San Diego Union-Tribune

A new report from the Rand Corp. analyzed survey data from thousands of active-duty military members and found Marines are more likely to be heavy drinkers, use tobacco and engage in riskier sexual behavior than the sailors, soldiers and airmen of the other branches.

Rand found that incidents of binge drinking and hazardous drinking among Marines was almost double what it was in the Air Force.

The report defines binge drinking as having at least four or five drinks on one occasion. Hazardous drinking is defined as usage that suggests alcohol use disorder, commonly known as alcoholism.

Nearly half of the Marines surveyed reported drinking habits that met the criteria for hazardous.

The survey also revealed Marines were more likely to have had more than one sex partner over the course of one year and were less likely to use condoms with new partners.

The data were gathered as part of the 2015 Health Related Behaviors Survey conducted across all branches of the military and the Coast Guard.

Researchers spent two years combing through and making sense of the data, which included responses to numerous aspects of physical and mental health.

In addition to questions about drug and alcohol use, respondents provided researchers with information on their eating and sleeping habits, sexual behavior and diets and exercise.

Almost 17,000 usable surveys were involved in the study.

Dr. Sarah Meadows, a senior sociologist at Rand who helped lead the study, said although it is useful in making policy decisions at the Department of Defense, people should be careful when drawing conclusions or casting judgment on one branch or another.

"We're not trying to blame anyone for this, but the Marine Corps does tend to stand out. Each of the services has their own culture."

Meadows said one of the reasons the Marines stand out is simple demographics.

"Marines tend to be young men," she said. "Compared to young men on college campuses, it's pretty similar."

Meadows partially explained the discrepancy as self-selecting based on who chooses to join the military and which branches they choose.

In other words, the type of person who joins the Marines is not necessarily the type of person who joins the Air Force.

The Navy came in second in alcohol use, followed by the Coast Guard and the Army.

Researchers also separated the data based on other factors, such as gender, race, age and rank. Results show that alcohol use is an issue across the services.

One in three said they had participated in binge-drinking in the past month. Almost 70 percent said they perceived military culture as supportive of drinking.



REBEKKA HEITE/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

A Rand Corp. report found that Marines have the highest rate of binge drinking and hazardous drinking among the military branches.

'We're not trying to blame anyone for this, but the Marine Corps does tend to stand out. Each of the services has their own culture.'

Dr. Sarah Meadows
senior sociologist at Rand

Overall, results show tobacco use down in the military, and lower than in the general population.

Marines led in tobacco use as well. Marines were significantly more likely to smoke cigarettes, cigars and e-cigarettes. They are also almost twice as likely as members in other branches to use smokeless tobacco, or "dip."

Noting the tobacco numbers overall showed a downward trend, Meadows said the results were encouraging. However, she did note that e-cigarette use was on the rise, and that was cause for concern.

"We don't know the long-term consequences," she said.

None of this information is new

to the military. Programs have existed for years aimed at curbing smoking and drinking.

1st Lt. David Morris works in communications at 1st Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, Calif. He said reports such as this one from Rand were useful in targeting areas of improvement for the Marines.

"Marines are always about constantly improving," he said. "If we can improve, it's something we'll explore."

Morris said that it's too soon to see any new programs emerge from the Rand study, but that there were existing programs in place on Camp Pendleton, such as the Substance Abuse Counseling Center.

"We do have programs when we identify high-risk Marines," he said.

He also said there were posters all around base discouraging vaping and that there were many places Marines could not use smokeless tobacco anymore.

Lisa Novak, a public affairs officer for the Coast Guard, said the service makes a concerted effort to educate its members about alcohol abuse and prevention.

"The Coast Guard provides consistent messaging about the services and support available to personnel," she said in an email.

Novak also said any member of the military can access the Pentagon's tobacco cessation programs for free via www.ucanquit2.org.

Meadows said the results would be useful to congress and the Defense Department in deciding where to devote resources. She suggested the department decide on certain benchmarks for the military, such as how much alcohol and tobacco use is acceptable.

"Obviously, the perfect answer is 'zero,'" she said, adding that that was an unrealistic goal. "(But) what is the right number for some of these things?"

House OKs bill letting troops cancel contracts with no fees

By NIKKI WENTLING

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The House approved legislation that would allow servicemembers to terminate their cable, satellite television and internet contracts without incurring fees when they move or deploy.

The bill, introduced by Rep. Ryan Costello, R-Pa., and Rep. Derek Kilmer, D-Wash., would update the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, which already allows troops to break rental contracts, car leases and cellphone contracts when they deploy or are relocated on active-duty orders. Some states allow servicemembers to get out of cable and internet contracts without paying early cancellation fees, but the policy isn't the same nationwide.

"While some states already do provide relief, this legislation would enact a policy at the federal level to ensure servicemembers and their families receive uniform assistance no matter what state they reside in," Costello said on the House floor.

The legislation was one of nine veterans-related bills the House passed last week before adjourning for its summer recess.

Another measure would create a fourth division within the Department of Veterans Affairs focused on economic opportunity — an idea that began gaining momentum in the spring.

In March, Student Veterans of America argued that VA economic opportunity programs, such as home loan guaranty and education and employment assistance, are buried in the agency's bureaucracy. A separate division would give the initiatives more prominence and potentially help ease the stress of transitioning from the military, the organization said.

The VA already comprises three administrations — benefits, health and cemeteries — each with its own undersecretary. The bill proposes creating a new undersecretary position to lead the new division.

For too long, the outdated structure of the VA has allowed economic opportunity and transition programs for our veterans to

fall by the wayside," Rep. Brad Wenstrup, R-Ohio, said on the House floor. "This will promote transparency and oversight while placing greater priority on opportunity-based programs within the VA."

One bill passed last week would allow spouses to terminate their rental contracts without penalty when a servicemember dies.

Other measures aim to create new performance metrics for human resources staff at the VA and make it easier for the VA to recruit former military medics. One would remove a 12-year limit for disabled veterans to participate in vocational rehabilitation programs.

Ahead of the August break, Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., and other Republicans on the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a news conference highlighting legislation signed into law this session.

Roe said more than two dozen measures for veterans were enacted this congressional session. Another 35 — including the nine approved last week — were passed by

the House and now await action in the Senate, he said.

It was uncertain Monday when the Senate might consider the nine bills. Senators are expected to work until the end of the week before leaving for a short recess.

The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on Wednesday is scheduled to discuss another bill, passed by the House in June, to provide VA benefits to approximately 90,000 sailors who served off the coast during the Vietnam War. "Blue Water" Navy veterans claim they — like ground troops — were affected by exposure to the chemical herbicide Agent Orange.

The House will return to Washington in September. When lawmakers get back, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs plans to address issues surrounding veteran mental health, veteran suicide and resources to tackle veteran homelessness, Roe said.

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VETERANS

Hotline: Some vets say service does little to help, function misrepresented

FROM FRONT PAGE

Some veterans have misperceived the hotline as a powerful link to the president's official residence. And the government hasn't done much to correct them.

Since the hotline became fully operational in November, the VA has released few details about the operation, its budget or how it differentiates from numerous other VA call lines. Requests for interviews about it have been ignored or shunted since April.

"This isn't going straight to the White House, and I don't think veterans know that, or have a good understanding what this hotline is supposed to be," said Licia Lynn, a Marine veteran who's called the hotline multiple times. "It's rough, because some people don't know how to advocate for themselves and were hoping the White House would advocate for them."

As promised

On the campaign trail on July 26, 2016, Trump spoke at the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Charlotte, N.C., and declared he would create a private, 24-hour White House hotline that veterans could use to relay their complaints about the VA. In the run-up to the 2016 election, Trump described the VA as the most corrupt federal agency and vowed that his administration would fix it. The hotline was No. 6 in his 10-point plan.

"I will create a private White House hotline — that is answered by a real person 24 hours a day — to make sure that no valid complaint about the VA ever falls through the cracks," Trump said. "I will instruct my staff that if a valid complaint is not acted upon, then the issue be brought directly to me, and I will pick up the phone and fix it myself, if needed."

He joked that the hotline could keep him up at night and "take the place of Twitter." "I want to have somebody, a real person and a really competent person, in the White House with that hotline going," Trump said.

This week marks the two-year anniversary of that pledge, and Trump addressed the VFW convention again — this time touting the hotline as a promise kept.

"As promised, we established the White House VA Hotline," he told a crowd of about 4,000 veterans.

Trump's administration, under former VA Secretary David Shulkin, did establish a hotline. After months of delays and a soft launch in June 2017, the VA declared it fully operational in November. It can be reached at 855-948-2311.

But there are many unknowns.

While the VA has released some basic statistics, such as how many calls the hotline has received and how long it takes to answer the phones, the agency has refused to disclose the total cost of the operation or to say how successful it is in resolving veterans' problems.

Some veterans who have used it complained it's doing the opposite of what was promised and sending their calls back to local VA offices rather than elevating their concerns to the highest reaches of government.

Veterans aren't the only ones with questions and misperceptions about the hotline. Lawmakers who are tasked with VA oversight, as well as the VA inspector general, aren't receiving answers.

When contacted by phone, VA Inspector General Michael Missal — who investigates VA programs and operations — said he was unaware of who ran the hotline and was uncertain whether he had oversight authority.

Rep. Tim Walz, D-Minn., the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on Vet-



NIKKI WENTLING/Stars and Stripes

A sign marks the doors for VA deliveries at a building in Shepherdstown, W.Va., that is now home to the White House VA Hotline. President Donald Trump promised during his 2016 campaign to establish the hotline as a direct line to the executive branch.

erans' Affairs, said in a statement his office has sought answers to questions about the hotline for months and received nothing in response.

"In fact, veterans on my own staff have resorted to calling the hotline themselves just to learn more about the hotline and how it functions," Walz said.

Rep. Phil Roe, the Republican chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, said in a statement that he looked forward to hearing more about the hotline and the concerns raised by callers.

"Part of truly reforming VA is to ensure veterans have an outlet to share their experiences with the department — both good and bad," Roe said.

Why Shepherdstown?

A man at the local visitor's center, taking a break from playing a bagpipe, said Shepherdstown has become a draw for weekend tourists from Washington and Baltimore. It's a 90-minute drive from each city when the traffic is good.

The town is home to about 1,700 people year-round and boasts an active three-block thoroughfare with a smattering of funky shops, fusion restaurants and a well-trafficked diner. The biggest employer is Shepherd University, a state-run liberal arts college that also takes up a large chunk of the town.

There are two minor attractions, both boasting views of the nearby Potomac River — a monument honoring the inventor of the steamboat, James Rumsey, and the Bavarian Inn, a hotel that promises fine European dining. Every summer about this time, residents look forward to a renowned theater festival that brings in visitors from across the mid-Atlantic.

On the south side of town, on the campus of the local Clarion Hotel and Conference Center is the White House VA Hotline.

When contacted about the hotline, multiple officials who represent Shepherdstown in the state legislature didn't know it was there.

"I didn't know about it," said Patricia Rucker, a Republican senator from Jefferson County, where Shepherdstown is located. "Obviously, I'm very glad and honored that they have chosen to open the center in Shepherdstown."

The VA has stated in news releases that

the hotline is based in West Virginia, but it won't discuss why that was the chosen site.

Rucker cited the proximity to the Washington metro area as a possible reason the place was selected. She also guessed property is more affordable here than anywhere closer to D.C.

When a reporter showed up at the building in late June, about 70 cars were parked in the government-only lots surrounding the building. The program manager for the hotline, Randy Kunkleman, allowed entry but eventually was prohibited by VA head-quarters from speaking on the record.

Tim Hudak, a communications official with the Veterans Experience Office in Washington, told Stars and Stripes that hotline staff couldn't accommodate a tour at that time. He referred questions to VA Press Secretary Curt Cashour, who said he would arrange an interview and a possible visit, but — after multiple inquiries — he hasn't. On Friday, Cashour offered a tour, but only after The Washington Post published a story based on its tour.

'It does no good'

When announced, the White House hotline was thought to give veterans a direct line to the executive branch.

A half-dozen veterans who have used the hotline and relayed their experiences to Stars and Stripes said they didn't believe that was the case in their situations. They called the hotline for a variety of reasons, from policy questions to complaints about VA programs and requests for help setting up medical appointments.

Coast Guard veteran Thomas Fant, 46, called the hotline with a criticism about the length of time it took to secure a medical appointment through the VA Choice program, which allows veterans to go into the private sector for care.

A hotline agent sent Fant back to the private-sector provider to whom he already had spoken about the issue.

"You call there because you've exhausted all other options with your local VA, but what happens is it just circles right back to the origin of the issue. It does no good," Fant said.

The VA maintains one call line for benefits questions, 800-827-1000; one for health care questions, 877-222-8387; another for

online account problems, 800-983-0937; and one for burial eligibility information, 800-535-1117.

The VA Inspector General's Office has its own hotline to receive VA complaints, at 800-488-8244. The U.S. Office of Special Counsel has a hotline, 800-872-9855, to document employee retaliation issues at the VA.

The White House hotline receives some calls that are transferred directly to the Veterans Crisis Line or the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans. Last month, 200 calls were sent to the crisis line, Cashour said.

The new hotline, rather than eliminating bureaucracy as Trump promised, merely added another layer of it, Fant argued.

"It really hasn't served any real benefit or purpose that I know of," he said.

Brian Lewis, 38, a veteran and attorney in Woodbury, Minn., had a similar experience. He recently called the White House hotline with a complaint about the Minneapolis VA. The hotline agent rerouted him back to a VA employee in Minneapolis, and his issue was never resolved, Lewis said.

"I am dismayed the president touted this system as an effective remedy, when it is merely a continuation of the failed VA patient advocacy system," Lewis said in an email.

Licia Lynn, 32, is a social worker who has tried to use the hotline on behalf of veterans she assists. One veteran asked her to get him a new VA doctor. Others were attempting to check on backlogged claims.

Half of the time, the person who answered the phone routed Lynn to her elected officials' offices. Other times, the calls went unanswered, she said.

"It just doesn't seem like it's really working, and that's terrible to say," Lynn said. "I want it to work. I want it to work for my fellow veterans. I just haven't had a good experience with it."

The hotline is receiving some positive feedback, Cashour said. Since October, it's received 560 calls from veterans who were helped by the hotline and wanted to complement the staff.

Army veteran Allison Bockstanz, 39, described a good experience. Bockstanz called multiple times with complaints about the Ann Arbor and Washington medical centers. She recently called to check on the status of her disability rating.

Each time she's called, someone immediately answered and followed up with an email, Bockstanz said.

"I think it's working," she said. "I feel like the line is making the VA accountable for their actions. Everybody thinks that everything is bad, but I can tell you it was a lot worse, at least for me, a year ago."

Costs unclear

When the hotline quietly launched last summer, Shulkin said it would cost about \$200,000 to kick off. The VA hasn't released updated cost estimates, but USASPEND-ING.gov, an official government source for data on federal awards, lists three contracts totaling \$2.2 million awarded to AT&T Corp. for a "veterans hotline" in September.

The contracts list the VA hospital in Mansfield, W.Va., as the location. Martinsburg is the parent duty station for the Shepherdstown facility.

Jim Greer, director of corporate communications for AT&T, said only that AT&T is involved with the hotline and "proud of the services we've provided." He referred questions about their involvement to the VA. Cashour did not respond to a question about the contracts with AT&T.

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NATION



MANUEL BALCE CENETA/AP

Attorney General Jeff Sessions speaks Monday as Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein looks on during a Religious Liberty Summit at the Department of Justice.

Sessions says Western culture is 'less hospitable to people of faith'

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Jeff Sessions says the Justice Department is committed to protecting the religious rights of Americans.

In a speech Monday at a religious liberty summit, Sessions said there's a "dangerous move-

ment" to erode protections for Americans to worship and believe as they choose.

Sessions said Western culture has become "less hospitable to people of faith."

He praised a Colorado baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a same-sex couple and said "we've seen nuns ordered to buy contraceptives" and U.S. sen-

ators ask judicial nominees about their religious beliefs. That baker, Jack Phillips, was at the center of a case that reached the Supreme Court this year.

Sessions said that he believes one reason President Donald Trump was elected was because "he said he respected people of faith."

Study: 'Medicare for all' would cost \$32.6T

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sen. Bernie Sanders' "Medicare for all" plan would increase government health care spending by \$32.6 trillion over 10 years, according to a study by a university-based libertarian policy center.

That's trillion with a "T." The latest plan from the Vermont independent would require historic tax increases as government replaces what employers and consumers now pay for health care, according to the analysis being released Monday by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University in Virginia. It would deliver significant savings on administration and drug costs, but increased demand for

care would drive up spending, the analysis found.

Sanders' plan builds on Medicare, the popular insurance program for seniors. All U.S. residents would be covered with no payments or deductibles for medical services. The insurance industry would be relegated to a minor role.

"Enacting something like 'Medicare for all' would be a transformative change in the size of the federal government," said Charles Blahous, the study's author. Blahous was a senior economic adviser to former President George W. Bush and a public trustee of Social Security and Medicare during the Obama administration.

Responding to the study, Sanders took aim at the Mercatus Cen-

ter, which receives funding from the conservative Koch brothers. Koch Industries CEO Charles Koch is on the center's board.

"If every major country on earth can guarantee health care to all, and achieve better health outcomes, while spending substantially less per capita than we do, it is absurd for anyone to suggest that the United States cannot do the same," Sanders said in a statement. "This grossly misleading and biased report is the Koch brothers' response to the growing support in our country for a 'Medicare for all' program."

Sanders' office has not done a cost analysis, a spokesman said. However, the Mercatus estimates are within the range of other cost projections for Sanders' 2016 plan.

Outage delays flights for American Airlines

FORT WORTH, Texas — The Federal Aviation Administration says no American Airlines flights took off nationwide for about 40 minutes Sunday because of an outage at the carrier's main operating system and dispatch

operation.

Fort Worth-based American said in a statement the airline "experienced a brief connectivity issue" with one of its data centers and that all operations were returning to normal.

The FAA said in a tweet it worked with American to impose the ground stop after the failure

about 2:05 p.m. EDT Sunday. The agency said the system was restored about 2:45 p.m. and flights were allowed to resume.

In the brief statement, American spokeswoman Luren Ruotolo said the airline apologizes to its customers "for the inconvenience."

From The Associated Press

Suit filed in fatal duck boat sinking seeks \$100M

By MARGARET STAFFORD
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The owners and operators of a tourist boat that sank this month in Missouri, killing 17 people, put profits over people's safety when they decided to put the Ride the Ducks boat on a lake despite design problems and warnings of severe weather, a lawsuit alleges.

The lawsuit filed Sunday in U.S. District Court in Kansas City seeks \$100 million in damages on behalf of two of nine members of an Indiana family who died when the tourist boat sank July 19 at Table Rock Lake near Branson. Others killed were from Arkansas, Illinois and Missouri.

"This tragedy was the predictable and predicted result of decades of unacceptable greed-driven, and willful ignorance of safety by the Duck Boat industry in the face of specific and repeated warnings that their Duck Boats are death traps for passengers and pose grave danger to the public on water and on land," the lawsuit alleges.

Ripley Entertainment Inc., Ride the Ducks International, Ride the Ducks of Branson, the Herschend Family Entertainment Corp. and Amphibious Vehicle Manufacturing are named in the lawsuit, which was filed by a team led by a Philadelphia-based legal firm that has litigated previous lawsuits involving duck boats. The legal team planned a news conference Monday morning.

A Ripley spokeswoman said in a statement Monday that the company remains "deeply saddened" by the accident and supportive of the affected families. She said the company would not comment further because a National Transportation Safety Board is still underway and no conclusions have been reached.

The lawsuit says the boat operators violated the company's own policies by putting the boat into the water despite the weather warnings. It also says the captain violated protocol by not telling passengers to put on life jackets when the water got rough and instead lowering plastic side cur-

tains, "thus further entrapping passengers in the soon-to-sink vessel."

The lawsuit cites an August 2017 report from private inspector Steve Paul, who looked at two dozen of the duck boats. The report warned Ripley Entertainment that the vessels' engines — and pumps that remove water from their hulls — were susceptible to failing in bad weather. It also accuses the defendants of ignoring warnings the NTSB issued in 2000 that the vehicles, which are designed to operate on land and water, should be upgraded to ensure the boats remain upright and floating in bad weather.

The 2000 recommendation from the NTSB was issued after a duck boat sank May 1, 1999, in Arkansas, killing 13 people.

When Robert McDowell, then-president of Ride the Ducks Branson, responded that upgrades would require significant costs, NTSB Chairman Jim Hall said the recommendations were made because the agency believed "immediate action was necessary to avoid additional loss of life." The lawsuit says the defendants ignored the warnings.

It also alleges McDowell designed and developed the stretch duck boats, including the Stretch Duck 07 that sank, despite having no engineering training.

The National Weather Service issued a severe thunderstorm warning for the area including Table Rock Lake about 30 minutes before the boat went onto the lake with 31 people on board.

The NTSB said Friday that a preliminary review of video and audio recordings from the boat showed that the lake changed from calm to dangerous in a matter of minutes. The agency emphasized it had not drawn any conclusions on what caused the boat to sink.

The captain, who operated the boat on the water, survived and has acknowledged he was aware of the weather warnings before the trip, according to the NTSB. Another crewmember who operated the boat on land was among those who died.



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NATION

AP-NORC/MTV Poll: Young people seek younger leaders

By LAURIE KELLMAN
AND HANNAH FINGERHUT
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Young people are looking for a change this election season — a generational change.

A poll by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and MTV found that most Americans ages 15 to 34 think voting in the midterm elections gives their generation some say about how the government is run, and 79 percent of this group say leaders from their generation would do a better job running the country.

The poll found young people eager to vote for someone who shared their political views on issues like health care and immigration policy. They expressed far less excitement about voting for a candidate described as a lifelong politician.

"These older Congress people, they don't understand the internet and they don't know what they're talking about," said Greg Davis, 29, from Grandview, Ohio, who

said he watched in exasperation last spring as Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg easily handled what was supposed to be a Senate grilling on privacy policy. "The questions that he was getting asked about security and privacy were asinine. We need leadership that actually understands tech."

It's true that the current Congress is among the oldest in U.S. history. At the beginning of the 115th Congress in January 2017, the average age of House members was nearly 58. The average age of senators was nearly 62, among the oldest, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Political change is in the air in 2018. A record number of women are running. Young Americans who don't remember a time without the internet are eligible to cast ballots. Some started paying attention in 2016, after Donald Trump upset Democrat Hillary Clinton and political tensions in the U.S. escalated.

About two-thirds of the young people in the poll say they are extremely or very excited to vote

for a candidate who cares about the issues that affect them and their generation, including the economy, gun policy and equal rights, along with immigration and health care. Although most say they'd be at least moderately excited to vote for younger, non-white and female candidates, those characteristics don't generate as much excitement as someone who shares their political views. By contrast, fewer than half are at least moderately excited about a candidate who is a lifelong politician.

That could matter in the 2018 midterm elections if young people turn out to vote, a result that campaigns and political action committees are spending big money to produce. One measure of whether they are succeeding is engagement. About half of young adults report following news about the midterms often or sometimes. About another quarter say they engage on social media. About a third say they're certain to vote, with some others indicating they are more likely to vote than not.

If more young people turn out



M. SPENCER GREEN/AP

Voters cast their ballots in Hinsdale, Ill., in March 2014.

at the polls, it's Democrats who are poised to benefit. Not only are young adults more likely to be Democrats, but young Democrats are also more likely than young Republicans to say they're certain to vote, 40 percent to 27 percent. Roughly two-thirds of Democrats are engaging with news about the elections often or sometimes, and more Democrats than Republicans say they're interested in the midterm elections. For many Democrats, this interest is derived from the 2016 presidential election: 54 percent say the outcome increased their interest in the 2018 midterm elections.

"I haven't voted so much in the past, but I'm paying attention this year," said Tyler Seulean, 26, a truck driver from Houston who said he leans to the political left. He said he did not vote in the 2016 election but is following immigra-

tion and other issues related to Trump's administration. "I'm older," he added. "It's more important to me now."

Another factor in whether this group will be motivated to vote is that they feel pessimistic about the political environment. Nearly 7 in 10 young adults think American politics have not been functioning well in the past month, and many think the country will become even more politically divided in the next few years.

The AP-NORC and MTV poll of 1,030 young Americans age 15-34 was conducted June 21 to July 9. The poll was conducted using NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.3 percentage points.

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NATION

Manafort trial yields glimpse of what Mueller has

By ERIC TUCKER and CHAD DAY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The trial of President Donald Trump's onetime campaign chairman will open this week with tales of lavish spending, secret shell companies and millions of dollars of Ukrainian money flowing through offshore bank accounts and into the political consultant's pocket.

What's likely to be missing: answers about whether the Trump campaign coordinated with the Kremlin during the 2016 presidential election, or really any mention of Russia at all.

Paul Manafort's financial crimes trial, the first arising from special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation, will center on his Ukrainian consulting work and only briefly will touch on his involvement with the president's campaign.

But the broader implications are unmistakable.

The trial, scheduled to begin Tuesday with jury selection in Alexandria, Va., will give the public its most detailed glimpse of evidence Mueller's team has spent the year accumulating. It will feature testimony about the business dealings and foreign ties of a defendant Trump entrusted to run his campaign during a critical stretch in 2016, including during the Republican convention. And it will unfold at a delicate time for the president as Mueller's team presses for an interview and as Trump escalates his attacks on an investigation he

calls a "witch hunt."

Adding to the intrigue is the expected spectacle of Manafort's deputy, Rick Gates, testifying against him after cutting a plea deal with prosecutors, and the speculation that Manafort, who faces charges in two different courts and decades in prison if convicted, could be holding out for a pardon from Trump.

"Perhaps he believes that he's done nothing wrong, and because he's done nothing wrong, he's unwilling to plead guilty to any crime whatsoever — even if it's a lesser crime," said Jimmy Gurule, a Notre Dame law professor and former federal prosecutor. "Obviously, that's very risky for him."

Manafort was indicted along with Gates in Mueller's wide-ranging investigation, but he is the only American charged to opt for a trial instead of cooperating with the government. The remaining 31 individuals charged, either have reached plea agreements, including ex-White House national security adviser Michael Flynn, or are Russians seen as unlikely to enter an American courtroom. Three Russian companies also have been charged.

Prosecutors in Manafort's case have said they could call 35 witnesses, including five who have immunity agreements, as they try to prove that he laundered more than \$30 million in Ukrainian political consulting proceeds and concealed the funds from



Manafort

the IRS.

Jurors are expected to see photographs of his Mercedes-Benz and of his Hampton property putting green and swimming pool. There's likely to be testimony, too, about tailored Beverly Hills clothing, high-end antiques, rugs and art and New York Yankees seasons tickets.

The luxurious lifestyle was funded by Manafort's political consulting for the pro-Russia Ukrainian political party of Viktor Yanukovich, who was deposed as Ukraine's president in 2014.

Lawyers have tangled over how much jurors will hear of his overseas political work, particularly about his ties to Russia and other wealthy political figures.

At a recent hearing, U.S. District Judge T.S. Ellis III, who will preside over the trial, warned prosecutors to restrain themselves, noting the current "antipathy" toward Russia and how "most people in this country don't distinguish between Ukrainians and Russians." He said he would not tolerate any pictures of Manafort and others "at a cocktail party with scantily clad women," if they exist.

Prosecutor Greg Andres reassured the judge that "there will be no pictures of scantily clad women, period," nor photographs of Russian flags.

While jurors will be hearing painstaking detail about Manafort's finances, they won't be told about Manafort's other criminal case, in the nation's capital, where he faces charges of acting as an unregistered

foreign agent and lying to the government.

Nor will they hear about the reason he's been jailed since last month after a judge revoked his house arrest over allegations that he and a longtime associate attempted to tamper with witnesses in the case. And they won't learn that Manafort's co-defendant in the Washington case is a business associate named Konstantin Kilimnik, who lives in Russia and who U.S. authorities assert has connections to Russian intelligence.

Trump and his lawyers repeatedly have sought to play down Manafort's connection to the president, yet the trial won't be entirely without references to the campaign.

Mueller's team says Manafort's position in the Trump campaign is relevant to some of the bank fraud charges. Prosecutors plan to present evidence that a chairman of one of the banks allowed Manafort to file inaccurate loan information in exchange for a job on the campaign and the promise of a job in the Trump administration. The administration job never materialized.

The trial will afford the public its first glimpse of a defense that so far has focused less on the substance of the allegations than on Mueller's authority to bring the case in the first place.

Ellis rejected that argument despite initially having questioned the special counsel's motives for bringing the case. He noted that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller, explicitly had authorized Mueller to investigate Manafort's business dealings.

Giuliani won't explain Trump's description of bad business ties with Mueller

By JOHN WAGNER
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani declined on Monday to explain the president's allegation that special counsel Robert Mueller has a conflict of interest because of a past business relationship with Trump.

In a series of tweets about the Russia investigation on Sunday, Trump claimed that Mueller has multiple conflicts of interests, including "the fact that we had a very nasty & contentious business relationship."

Pressed during a television interview Monday about what Trump meant, Giuliani said the dispute remains unresolved "even to this day" and was serious enough that it would have kept him from taking a position investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election.

But Giuliani declined to detail the alleged conflict, calling on Mueller to "stand up and be a man" and disclose it.

"He has the conflict, not the president," Giuliani told CNN's Alisyn Camerota. "I have a good idea what it is. It's one that would have kept me out of the

investigation."

Giuliani also declined to say whether Trump was referring to an alleged dispute over membership fees at Trump National Golf Club in Virginia.

Last year, two White House advisers told The Washington Post that Mueller had a dispute over membership fees when he resigned as a club member in 2011. A spokesman for Mueller, who was FBI director at the time, said there was no dispute when Mueller left the club.

"I'm not going to go any further," Giuliani said when asked about the golf club allegation.

In his Sunday tweet, Trump also said that he turned down Mueller "to head the FBI" shortly before he was named special counsel by the Justice Department and that former FBI Director James Comey is a "close friend" of Mueller.

Trump's firing of Comey last year is among the actions being examined by Mueller's team as it probes whether Trump has sought to obstruct the investigation into possible coordination between his campaign and Russia.

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NATION

Thousands more flee Calif. wildfires

By JONATHAN J. COOPER
AND SUDDHIN THANAWALA
Associated Press

REDDING, Calif. — Thousands more fled their homes after wildfires surged near a small lake town in Northern California while a deadly blaze farther north slowed slightly as crews stretched to their limits across the state fight flames that have claimed the lives of both firefighters and civilians.

Residents of the waterfront town Lakeport fled Sunday after a major flare-up of two fires that combined across Mendocino and Lake counties destroyed at least four homes. Lakeport, home to about 5,000, is around 120 miles north of San Francisco.

More than 4,500 buildings were under threat, officials said. The two fires had blackened 47 square miles, with minimal containment.

About 100 miles northeast, officials near Redding struck a hopeful tone for the first time in days as a massive fire slowed following days of explosive growth.

"We're feeling a lot more optimistic today as we're starting to gain some ground rather than being in a defensive mode on this fire all the time," said Bret Gouveia, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's incident commander on the blaze around Redding, a city about 230 miles north of San Francisco.

County Sheriff Tom Bosenko said authorities found a sixth victim of the blaze at a home that was consumed by flames, though he declined to say where. The victim's identity was not released.

The sheriff's department is also investigating seven missing persons reports, Bosenko said. Red-



NOAH BERGER/AP

An Army National Guard specialist speaks to a driver at a checkpoint as the Carr Fire burns in Redding, Calif., on Saturday. The fire was ignited July 23 by a vehicle problem.

ding police have an additional 11 reports of missing people, though many of them may simply not have checked in with friends or family, said Redding police Sgt. Todd Cogle.

The so-called Carr Fire that affected Redding — a city of about 92,000 people — was ignited by a vehicle problem on July 23 about 10 miles west of the city. On Thursday, it swept through the historic Gold Rush town of Shasta and nearby Keswick fueled by gusty winds and dry vegetation. It then jumped the Sacramento

River and took out subdivisions on the western edge of Redding.

Redding Police Chief Roger Moore kept up an around-the-clock work schedule despite learning that his home was one of those destroyed. He was finally able to shave on Saturday when his wife brought him a razor, he said.

Moore was helping evacuate people from his River Ridge neighborhood in western Redding when the flames became unbearable.

"I saw everything around it ig-

nite, and I go, 'It's gone,'" Moore said.

The latest tally showed at least 657 homes destroyed and another 145 damaged, with the fire having consumed 149 square miles.

Meanwhile officials said a second firefighter died fighting a huge blaze to the south near Yosemite National Park. Brian Hughes, 33, was struck by a tree and killed while working as part of a crew removing brush and other fuel near the so-called Ferguson Fire's front lines, national parks officials said.

Officers' bodycam video released in Minn. shooting

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Authorities in Minneapolis released body camera video from two police officers in the fatal shooting of a 31-year-old black man, with the footage showing the man shot from behind after a frenetic foot chase and what appeared to be a gun in his hand.

Officers Justin Schmidt and Ryan Kelly were responding to a 911 call of a man firing a gun into the air on the city's north side June 23. The video released Sunday shows them pulling their cruiser up and a man — Thurman Blevins — seated on a curb near a woman with a child in a stroller. As the officers pull up, one says, "He's got a gun!" Blevins jumps up and runs, as the officers yell "Stop, stop! Put your hands up! I will (expletive) shoot you!"

In a chase that takes less than a minute, Blevins yells back, "I didn't do nothing bro." "Please don't shoot" and "Leave me alone." An enhanced version of the video has a red circle drawn around Blevins' hand to highlight

what appears to be a gun. After the chase turns down an alley, Blevins is shot, still running.

Investigators said both Kelly and Schmidt fired their weapons. An autopsy showed Blevins was shot multiple times.

Investigators have said the officers arrived to find Blevins sitting with a woman on a curb before he ran, carrying a black and silver gun. A gun was recovered at the scene. Some witnesses had disputed Blevins was armed, saying he was carrying a bottle or a cup. He appeared to have something in each hand when he first ran.

The two officers are on paid administrative leave. A protest of Blevins' death was planned for Tuesday afternoon at the Hennepin County Government Center.

Kelly has been with the police department since 2013 and Schmidt joined in 2014. Both had served in the military and had been recognized numerous times for their work as police officers, according to redacted personnel files. They also both have had complaints against them.

Man charged in fatal shooting of rookie Ariz. state trooper

Associated Press

GOODYEAR, Ariz. — A man was charged with murder in the fatal shooting of a rookie Arizona state trooper still in training, state officials said.

Isaac King, 20, was charged with several counts including first-degree murder, spokesman Raul Garcia said in a statement Sunday.

The shooting occurred after troopers responded to reports late Wednesday of a person throwing rocks at vehicles on Interstate 10 roughly 15 miles west of downtown Phoenix. Motorists had also pulled over to try to get the suspect off the road, according to Arizona Department of Public Safety officials.

A fight ensued when troopers tried to get King off the roadway. Trooper Tyler Endenhofer, 24, was shot and killed during the struggle. He was in his last week of field training.

King was transported to a hospital, but authorities would not say why he was hospitalized. He was charged after he made a re-

mate appearance before a judge Sunday from his hospital room.

King, who lives in Avondale, was on medication for anxiety and depression and has no criminal record, said DPS Col. Frank Milstead.

Six officers, including some local police, were struggling with the suspect for several minutes when he somehow got a hold of Trooper Sean Rodecap's weapon. Rodecap is a field training officer who was not wearing a uniform. King then fired two shots, Milstead said.

One hit Endenhofer in the shoulder but ricocheted downward, DPS spokesman Capt. Tony Mapp said. Trooper Dalin Dorris was shot through the shoulder, treated at a hospital and released.

Rodecap was injured, but not shot, in the fight. Whether the weapon became dislodged or how King was able to fire it is under investigation, Milstead said.

Endenhofer, a U.S. Navy veteran, was killed just two months after graduating from the Department of Public Safety academy.

Flood of new insurance policies seen post-Harvey

Associated Press

KATY, Texas — A little more than two months before Hurricane Harvey slammed the Gulf Coast of Texas, Alberto Castaneda let his home's flood insurance lapse. He had never filed a claim on the policy in 10 years and he needed the extra cash to expand his restaurant business.

Standing inside his suburban Houston home nearly a year later, Castaneda tallies the cost of the destructive floods to himself and his uninsured neighbors: one couple in their 70s let their home go into foreclosure; two people, overwhelmed by the difficulties of rebuilding, committed suicide; Castaneda, 52, ended up using nearly \$135,000 from his business to cover repairs to his home that Harvey submerged under more than 2 feet of water.

"It's very devastating, especially if you don't have the insurance. You feel like, 'What am I going to do?'" Castaneda tearfully said.

Castaneda bought new flood insurance after Harvey, and many others in Texas have done the same. But data from states with a history of extreme weather suggest those numbers will eventually drop off, leaving residents once again vulnerable to flooding costs.

A situation the Federal Emergency Management Agency says it's working to avoid.

Houston, in Harris County, suffered the brunt of Harvey when it pummeled Texas last August. Harvey dumped nearly 50 inches of rain on parts of the flood-prone city. The storm killed nearly 70 people, damaged more than 300,000 structures and caused an estimated \$125 billion in damage.

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett, the top elected county official, said more than 100,000 flooded homes in Harris County didn't have flood insurance. According to FEMA, 80 percent of all households affected by Harvey weren't covered for floods.

An AP analysis found fewer than 1 in 5 properties in high-risk flood zones had coverage.

According to FEMA, Texas experienced a more than 18 percent increase in flood insurance policies from July 2017 to the end of May, reversing a long-term declining trend. Harris County saw a near 23 percent jump, while neighboring Fort Bend County, where Castaneda lives, saw a 54 percent increase.

But experts warn the data doesn't mean a permanent upswing.

Residents tend to buy policies for a few years after big disasters then cancel because they feel the unused policy is an unnecessary expense, said Howard Kunreuther, co-director of the University of Pennsylvania's Risk Management and Decision Processes Center.

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Sunday, March 25, 1945

For the troops

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WORLD

Report on MH370: Intervention of 3rd party a possibility

By EILEEN NG
Associated Press

PUTRAJAYA, Malaysia — A Malaysian-led independent investigation report released Monday, more than four years after Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 disappeared, highlighted shortcomings in the government's response and raised the possibility of "intervention by a third party."

The report, prepared by a 19-member international team, reiterated Malaysia's assertion the plane was deliberately diverted and flown for over seven hours after severing communications.

Chief investigator Kok Soo Chon said the cause of the disappearance cannot be determined until the wreckage and the plane's black boxes are found. He said there was no evidence of abnormal behavior or stress in the two pilots that could lead them to hijack the plane but all passengers were also cleared by police and had no pilot training.

"We are not of the opinion that it could be an event committed by the pilot," Kok told a media

briefing.

"We cannot rule out unlawful interference by a third party," such as someone holding the pilots hostage, he said. But he added that no group has said it hijacked the plane and no ransom demands have been made, compounding the mystery. Kok said it was up to police to investigate.

He said the investigation showed lapses by air traffic control, including a failure to swiftly initiate an emergency response and monitor radar continuously, relying too much on information from Malaysia Airlines and not getting in touch with the military for help.

The plane carrying 239 people from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing vanished March 8, 2014, and is presumed to have crashed in the far southern Indian Ocean. The report said there was insufficient information to determine if the aircraft broke up in the air or during impact with the ocean.

Scattered pieces of debris that washed ashore on African beaches and Indian Ocean islands indicated a distant remote stretch of



A relative, right, of passengers on the missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 reacts at an MH370 safety investigation report briefing at the Ministry of Transportation in Putrajaya, Malaysia, on Monday.

the ocean where the plane likely crashed.

But a government search by Australia, Malaysia and China failed to pinpoint a location. A second, private search by U.S. company Ocean Infinity that finished at the end of May also found no sign of the wreckage.

Family members of those on board the plane said after a briefing by the investigation team that they were frustrated because there were many gaps in the probe and questions left unanswered.

"There is nothing new but it highlighted failings of some government agencies" that did not follow protocol and guidelines, said Grace Nathan, whose mother

was on board the plane.

She said the scope of the safety investigation was also too limited, depended too much on information supplied to them by other parties rather than on their own probe, and didn't discuss the scope of the searches.

Officials said Malaysia's report is still not a final accounting because the plane hasn't been found. Malaysia's government has said it is open to resuming the search if credible evidence of the plane's location emerges.

New Malaysian Transport Minister Anthony Loke said the government will investigate and take action against any misconduct based on the report findings.

2 US cyclists killed in crash in Tajikistan

MOSCOW — U.S. and Tajik officials say two American cyclists were killed in a car crash in the former Soviet Central Asian nation.

Tajikistan's Interior Ministry said an unidentified driver rammed a car into a group of foreign cyclists about 60 miles south of the Tajik capital Dushanbe on Sunday.

Two Americans died, the U.S. Embassy in Tajikistan said on Facebook. Another foreign tourist also died on the spot, according to the Interior Ministry.

The statement did not say where the third victim was from.

Opposition says election marks end of democracy

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — The ruling party of Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen congratulated itself Monday on its election victory, while the opposition party unable to contest the polls said they marked the death of democracy in the Southeast Asian country, making its government and any dealings with it illegitimate.

Although 20 parties contested the election, the only one with the popularity and organization to mount a real challenge, the Cambodian National Rescue Party, was dissolved last year by the Supreme Court in a ruling generally seen as political.

Bishop convicted of cover-up resigns

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis on Monday accepted the resignation of an Australian archbishop convicted in criminal court of covering up the sexual abuse of children by a priest.

It was the second major announcement of a sex abuse-related resignation in as many days. Adelaide Archbishop Philip Wilson was convicted in May of failing to report to police the repeated abuse of two altar boys by a pedophile priest in the Hunter Valley region north of Sydney during the 1970s.

On Saturday, Francis accepted the resignation of U.S. Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the former archbishop of Washington.

Report: Trump golf course damaged dunes

LONDON — President Donald Trump's family business partially destroyed legally protected sand dunes in Scotland when it built a golf course north of Aberdeen, according to government reports released in response to a freedom of information request.

Scottish Natural Heritage, which monitors the country's sensitive and scientifically important sites, found that construction of Trump International Golf Links Scotland "led to the direct loss" of up to 168 acres at the Foveran Links site.

The damaged and destroyed dunes, one of the best examples of moving sand dunes in Britain, developed over 4,000 years, according to the agency.

From The Associated Press

Rescuers reach tourists stranded by Indonesia quake

By ROSYIDIN SEMBAHULUN
Associated Press

SEMBALUN, Indonesia — Hundreds of tourists stranded on Mount Rinjani on the Indonesian island of Lombok by an earthquake that killed 16 people and triggered landslides were making their way off the mountain, shaken by their experience but mostly unharmed, an official said Monday.

By late afternoon, more than 250 people had reached a relief post in Sembalun village and a team of rescuers has reached hundreds more near the mountain's crater lake, a local military official, Arifianto, told Indonesian TV.

He said some suffered light injuries and

were traumatized, but most were in good condition.

The magnitude 6.4 earthquake early Sunday killed 16 people, including an Indonesian student who was among the Mount Rinjani climbers. The shallow quake set off landslides on the mountain that carpeted in boulders and rocks, blocking usual paths out.

The National Disaster Mitigation Agency had said more than 680 people were stranded on Rinjani, an active volcano, based on figures from its entry gates where visitors are registered. Most are foreign — from 26 countries, including more than 330 from Thailand.

Arifianto, who uses one name, said rescuers will escort trekkers down the mountain. Indo-

nesian's elite special forces have also been deployed to speed up the evacuation.

The shallow quake damaged more than 1,400 houses and was felt on neighboring Bali island, where no damage or casualties were reported.

Indonesia's meteorology and geophysics agency has recorded more than 270 aftershocks.

Anci, a villager from near the quake epicenter, said he and his family spent the night in a makeshift tent, worried that aftershocks could cause more buildings to collapse.

President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo said the government would give each family whose home was destroyed \$3,500 to rebuild.

Zimbabwean opposition cries foul in vote, points to delays

Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Zimbabwe's main opposition leader on Monday said reported voting delays were a "deliberate attempt" to undermine his supporters in the country's first election without former leader Robert Mugabe on the ballot.

The allegations by Nelson Chamisa, leader of the Movement for Democratic Change party, intensified concerns about management of the election and the prospect of a dispute over its outcome.

The voting turnout was high and, in a break from the past, peaceful.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, a former deputy president, has promised a cred-

ible vote that he hopes will bring international legitimacy and investment to this southern African country, though a seriously flawed process could signal more stagnation.

Mugabe, 94, ruled Zimbabwe from independence in 1980 until his resignation in November under military pressure, and many people are anxious for change.

The opposition was concerned about delays at polling stations in urban areas, where support for the opposition has traditionally been strong, while the ruling ZANU-PF party has dominated many rural areas in past elections marred by violence and irregularities.

"There seems to be a deliberate attempt to suppress and frustrate" urban voters through "unnecessary delays," Chamisa said on Twit-

ter. He acknowledged that there was a "good turnout."

Long lines formed outside many polling stations in Harare, the capital, and elsewhere. Anyone in line as of the 7 p.m. closing time could still vote, though opposition parties were concerned that their supporters could drift away if forced to wait for hours.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, accused of engineering flawed election wins for Mugabe in the past, has said this vote will be free and fair.

A record of more than 20 presidential candidates and nearly 130 political parties were participating. If no presidential candidate wins 50 percent of the vote, a runoff will be held Sept. 8.

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OPINION

Trump's outer calm belies inner chaos

By KATHLEEN PARKER
Washington Post Writers Group

Two distinct realities coexist in the nation's capital with the approximate compatibility of oil and water.

There's the reality of 4.1 percent economic growth, full employment, a declining trade deficit and some wage growth.

And then there's Michael Cohen. While President Donald Trump was focused on his sunny economic report Friday — and on tariff deals the days before — the media were obsessed with news that the president's former attorney was prepared to tell special counsel Robert Mueller that Trump knew in advance about the June 2016 campaign meeting between Donald Trump Jr. and Russians who allegedly had dirt on Hillary Clinton.

If true, then Cohen would be contradicting prior statements by both Trump men, including Trump Jr.'s testimony before a congressional committee. Whatever the case, the president has engineered an offensive strategy that could soften the effects of Cohen's news and most certainly will further fuel Americans' disgust with journalists.

Publicly, he has appeared more statesmanlike, less impetuous, more disciplined, calm and composed. In other words, Trump hasn't been himself. Distinctly missing last week was his usual puffed-up scowl; absent was the shimmering glare coursing through his carotids. Describing troubling news about Cohen; about hush money paid to a Playboy model during the 2016 campaign that Trump also allegedly knew about despite his denial; and a subpoena calling The Trump Organization's chief financial of-

ficer to testify — Trump seemed oddly at peace. Behind closed doors, he may have been dissembling insects, but at public events he seemed to have just emerged from hot yoga.

My guess: He has found serenity in gamesmanship and the knowledge that he's winning. And, he's quite a good actor — far better than Ronald Reagan, who essentially played himself in every role. When Trump is cool and collected, he's clearly playing someone else.

Scene One: It's Wednesday and Trump is seated next to European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in the Oval Office for a photo op. The two were about to hash out their differences on tariffs. This, and their joint announcement later in the day that they are seeking a trade peace pact, is big news given concerns about a trade war with our allies across the Atlantic.

After a few words by each man at the morning session, with the president indicating he wasn't taking questions by saying, *Thank you, thank you, thank you very much*, reporters created a fray in which to jump. CNN's Kaitlan Collins could be heard asking repeatedly about the Cohen news, while other reporters offered a convincing a cappella rendering of the barnyard at breakfast. Juncker, wearing a slight smile, seemed amused by the spectacle. (Collins was disinformed from the afternoon's Rose Garden press conference.)

Scene Two: It's Friday and Trump is delivering what can only be called good economic news. But some reporters focused instead on the fact that the news conference was "hastily" called. Others pointed out that wages are still low in some parts of the country or otherwise took pains to cast

a negative light on the news.

A few White House officials, including economic adviser Larry Kudlow, joined the president to claim that lowered taxes and deregulation had led to increases in employment and wages — and that these increases are sustainable. A reporter might have thought to ask Kudlow how the administration plans to deal with structural wage problems that are really no one's fault, or the president why he's paying farmers with taxpayer money to soften the blows of his own tariff policies.

Instead, NBC News' indefatigable Kristen Welker fired off a series of Cohen-related queries to the retreating backs of Trump and Co. as they turned to go inside. Trump knows that reporters will always opt for salaciousness and the scandal (a circumstance Trump created). He apparently has decided to let them, which for some in his base, creates the impression that he occupies the high ground.

His M.O.: Let them squawk and let the American people see what he has to deal with. In an ironic reversal, the man who is bereft of empathy seems to be betting on regular Americans feeling an abundance of empathy toward him — enough, perhaps, to last through the midterm elections in November.

Trump clearly hopes that his audience sees that he's working to build a robust economy, pursue fair trade deals, while collecting the remains of fallen Americans from North Korea. And that all the news media want to talk about is some made-up story by some lame, lying lawyer who is threatening to tell the court special counsel about some dumb meeting two years ago.

In politics, perception is everything.

Socialist Venezuela's inflation will hit 1M percent

By MEGAN MCDARLE
The Washington Post

According to the International Monetary Fund, by the end of the year, the annual inflation rate in Venezuela will reach 1 million percent.

A number like that is hard to grasp. Simply put, a candy bar that cost \$1 today would cost \$100,000 at the end of a year. Anyone in that position would understandably rush to spend the money right now, on anything that might possibly hold its value. Everyone else would too. The entire economy becomes a giant game of monetary "hot potato." Saving or planning becomes a sucker's game.

Venezuela is not exactly a struggling, undeveloped country; it has the world's largest proven oil reserves. How the heck did this happen?

There are two answers, one technical and one political.

The technical answer is that hyperinflation occurs because the government wants to spend much more money than it is collecting in taxes — so much more that no one is willing to lend it the money to cover the deficit. Instead, the government uses the central bank to finance the deficit. That puts more money in the economy, but since it's chasing the same number of goods and services, prices rise to soak up all the extra cash. Unless the government manages to close its budget deficit, it must print even more money to buy the same amount of stuff ...

Rinse and repeat a few times, and the inflation rate starts running into many zeros. The end generally arrives in one of two un-

pleasant ways: The government decides to stop the madness and implement a strenuous reform program, or the currency becomes so utterly devalued that churning out more of it is pointless. By the end of its hyperinflation, Zimbabwe was printing bank notes that ran into the trillions.

But it's not a secret that this is where hyperinflation ends. Why did Venezuela embark on the road to destruction? And why does the government stay on it while the citizenry slowly starves?

In a word, socialism. After his election as president in 1998, Hugo Chavez pursued an incredibly radical socialist agenda, one that continued under his 2013 successor, Nicolas Maduro. Chavez nationalized foreign oil fields, along with other significant portions of the economy, and diverted investment funds from PDVSA, the state-owned oil company, into vastly expanded social spending.

Unfortunately, Venezuela's heavy, sour crude oil was unusually hard to get out of the ground. Continual investment was needed to keep it flowing. So was the expertise of the banished foreign owners and the PDVSA engineers Chavez had purged for opposing this scheme. Production plunged; the only thing that kept Venezuela from disaster was a decade-long oil boom that offset falling production with rising prices.

Then came the 2008 financial crisis that crushed global demand for oil, followed by the onrush of U.S. shale oil, driving prices down further. And no one would loan money to Venezuela that couldn't be repaid in oil. Meanwhile, unwilling to admit that socialism had failed, Venezuela made a fateful turn to the central bank.

Now, one could say that this is not an

indictment of socialism so much as the particular Venezuelan implementation of it. But it's striking how the precarious economics of socialism, including hyperinflation, are tied to petroleum. Many of the notable hyperinflationary histories were tied to the collapse of the Soviet Union. And the story of the Soviet collapse is also a story about oil.

Central planning had wrecked the Soviets' grain production by the 1960s, and collectivized industry didn't produce anything that the rest of the world wanted to buy, leaving the Soviets unable to obtain hard currency to import grain. Oil sales propped up the Soviets until the mid-1980s, when prices crashed as new sources of oil came online (sound familiar?). The Soviet leadership was forced to liberalize to rescue the economy. The USSR's collapse soon followed.

Socialism, in other words, often seems to end up curiously synonymous with "petro-state." The new breed of socialists cites Norway as a model but saying "we should be like Norway" is equivalent to saying "we should be a very small country on top of a very large oil field."

Without brute commodity extraction, you need capitalist markets to generate a surplus to distribute, which is why Denmark's and Sweden's economies have more in common with the U.S. system than with the platform of the Democratic Socialists of America. And as both Venezuela and the Soviet Union show, even oil may not be enough to save socialism from itself.

Megan McDarle, a Washington Post opinions columnist, is a former columnist for Bloomberg View and author of "The Up Side of Down: Why Failing Well is the Key to Success."

Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



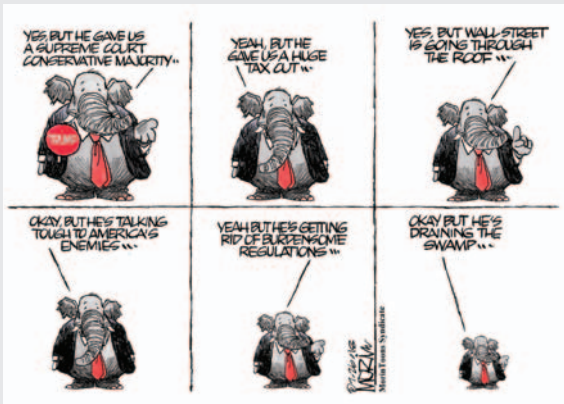
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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

No injuries after bears paw humans in park

AK ANCHORAGE — Alaska park officials said two incidents happened recently in which bears reached out and touched humans, something that hasn't happened in two decades. KTUU-TV reported Katmai National Park & Preserve said last week that a bear pawed a visitor's pant leg after approaching the visitor in a curious manner at Brooks Camp. A second bear that was being chased by another bear pawed an employee of Katmai's Brooks Lodge.

The National Park Service said in a news release that neither case led to injury to the people involved.

Officials said both cases involved young bears known as "subadults," a high number of which are now concentrated around Brooks Camp.

Pro-Trump flag on ferry brings investigation

NC HATTERAS — North Carolina officials are investigating after people shared photos on social media of a pro-Trump flag on a state-operated ferry on the Outer Banks.

Multiple news outlets reported that travelers said they saw the flag Thursday aboard the MV Frisco ferry. Photos posted on social media show the flag says "Trump 2020" and is flying below the U.S. flag and even with the North Carolina flag.

The Virginian-Pilot of Norfolk, Va., reported the flag was flown during a late run from Hatteras to Ocracoke. Ferry Division spokesman Tim Hass said the flag was up for one run.

Ferry system officials said they and the state Transportation Department are investigating.

National Lobster Day designation sought

RI PROVIDENCE — U.S. senators from New England want to grant the lobster another national day of celebration.

They've introduced a resolution to again designate Sept. 25 as National Lobster Day to honor the economic, historic, cultural and culinary contributions of lobsters.

The resolution is being led by Maine U.S. Sens. Angus King and Susan Collins, who say it honors not only the lobsters but also the people who harvest, ship and cook them.

Rhode Island U.S. Sen. Jack Reed said he expects the full Senate to agree unanimously approve it as a way to honor lobstermen and their catch.

Violin worth \$250K sold to pawn shop for \$50

MA SOMERVILLE — A violin bought by a Massachusetts pawn shop for \$50 ended up being worth a lot more — about 5,000 times that.

WFX-TV reported that a new employee at the LBC Boutique and Loan in Somerville had no idea what he was buying when

THE CENSUS

8 The number of years it took Drew Price to complete Vermont's first Master Angler Sweep by catching at least one trophy-sized specimen of 33 different fish species. The Colchester, Vt., man joined the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's Master Angler Program in 2010. The Burlington Free Press reported that he completed the challenge by catching a 30-inch pike-pickeral hybrid.



CHEIKO HARA, THE PORTERVILLE (CALIF.) RECORDER/AP

Turn on a dime

Kyle Kreeger of Discovery Bay, Calif., makes a tight turn, trying to catch up to the leader Saturday during the Jet Jam racing tour rounds 11 and 12 at Success Lake, near Porterville, Calif.

he paid for the Ferdinando Gagliano violin handcrafted in 1759 and worth \$250,000. Store manager Dylan McDermitt said the bows alone are worth \$16,000 to \$18,000.

Police said the violin was stolen during a house break-in and has been returned to its rightful owner.

Thieves steal center's bronze 1920s lampposts

IN LAFAYETTE — Police are investigating the theft of a pair of bronze lampposts dating to the 1920s that were unbolted and hauled away from outside an arts and cultural center in Lafayette.

The heavy ornamental posts had stood since 1926 outside the former library that's now the northwestern Indiana city's Wells Community Cultural Center.

Tetia Lee, the Tippecanoe Arts Federation's executive director, told the Journal & Courier that decorative elements which fell from the posts left a trail leading away from the building to an adjacent street.

Centuries-old butternut tree toppled by weather

NJ KINNELON — A centuries-old tree in Kinnelon was destroyed by heavy rain and strong wind.

A 60-foot butternut tree featured in the town's logo and on the patch worn by police officers fell after 245 years.

Mayor Robert Collins told The Record the town hopes to preserve as much wood as possible and use it for benches and a fire-place mantel at a new community center.

Residents planted a sapling using nuts from the tree 10 years ago that is now 15 feet tall.

Parents told to get rid of autistic son's ducks

MI GEORGETOWN TOWNSHIP — Parents of a 12-year-old boy with autism are fighting against a western Michigan township's order to get rid of their son's ducks that are used as emotional support animals.

WOOD-TV reported that

Georgetown Township zoning officials issued a nuisance order to Mark and Jen Dyke after receiving multiple complaints from neighbors about the ducks straying from their property and their unpleasant smell. Township officials said they're enforcing an ordinance that prohibits homeowners from having farm animals on their property.

The Dykes are requesting an ordinance variance and hope the township's zoning appeals board will rule in their favor next month.

Twister the tortoise back at rescue facility

ID NAMPA — A 75-pound tortoise named Twister who went missing from a reptile rescue facility in southwestern Idaho has returned.

Employees with Reptile Adventures in Nampa told KBOI-TV that Twister showed up in a yard Wednesday after disappearing from the same yard two days earlier.

Employees said they suspect someone removed Twister from

the yard and then brought him back. They said the tortoise appears to be healthy and doing well.

Twister has been at the facility for about a year and had his shell painted white, blue, yellow and red by previous owners before being surrendered.

Video captures officer helping homeless man

FL TALLAHASSEE — In a random act of kindness that's gone viral, a Florida police officer was captured on video helping a homeless man shave his thick beard before a job interview.

The Tallahassee Democrat reported Officer Tony Carlson pulled into a gas station recently and saw the man trying to shave. The man, identified only as Phil, didn't have a mirror and was having a hard time.

The video shows Carlson shaving the man's beard. Phil told the officer he was trying to get a job at the nearby McDonald's but needed to be clean-shaven to get hired.

From wire reports

FACES



WILLY SANJIAN, INVISION/AP

From left: Matt Groening, Abbi Jacobson, Eric Andre and Josh Weinstein, photographed July 29, are part of the voice cast of the new animated Netflix series “Disenchantment.” The series, from the creators of “The Simpsons” and aimed at adults, follows the misadventures of an alcoholic slacker princess.

Female leads ‘Disenchantment,’ latest from ‘Simpsons’ creators

Associated Press

Matt Groening said his new adult cartoon series “Disenchantment” has a feminist component that sets it apart from his previous shows.

Groening spoke to reporters about bringing fresh talent to the Netflix show at a Sunday panel at the Television Critics Association, joined by voice actors Abbi Jacobson and Eric Andre.

He also highlighted the differences between the new project and his previous work, the long-running Fox series “The Simpsons.”

“One of the reasons that ‘The Simpsons’ is what it is, is because of the time constraints,” he said. “In this show, we’re able to let it breathe a little more, which I find gratifying.”

The series still stands out as an adult cartoon with a female lead. It follows the misadventures of an alcoholic slacker princess named Princess Bean, voiced by “Broad City” star Abbi Jacobson, who has everything but a sense of purpose.

Joined by a personal demon named Luci, played by Andre, and a scruffy elf named Elfo (voiced by Nat Faxon), Bean creates mischief in the kingdom of Dreamland where she’s infamous for her careless antics.

“Bean is such an anti-stereotypical princess from what we are used to seeing,” said Jacobson.

Both Jacobson and Andre have a built a following with the hard-to-win young adult audience in their shows “Broad City” and “The Eric Andre Show.” The stars shared their stories of growing up watching “The Simpsons” and finding their place with Groening and Josh Weinstein, creators and producers of “Disenchantment.”

Weinstein said that while “Disenchantment” features established talent from both “Futurama” — which he produced — and “The Simpsons,” it transcends boundaries in both age and diversity. He said at least half the writing staff is under 30.

Groening also cited “Monty Python and the Holy Grail” as an inspiration for the series, but said that the feminist style of Jacobson’s “Broad City” influenced the show as well. “Disenchantment” premieres Aug. 17 on Netflix.

Stars add to new YouTube Originals fare

Will Smith, Jordan Peele, Kirsten Dunst and Robert Downey Jr. are part of YouTube Originals’ new series lineup.

YouTube said July 27 that in “Will Smith: The Jump,” the star will bungee jump from a helicopter over the Grand Canyon. The live broadcast will take place Sept. 25, Smith’s 50th birthday. Smith’s bravado is in response to a challenge from the Yes Theory channel on YouTube.

“Get Out” filmmaker Peele is the co-creator (with “Key & Peele” writer Charlie Sanders) of “Weird City,” described by

YouTube as a comedic sci-fi anthology series with six episodes.

Guest stars will include Rosario Dawson, Michael Cera and LaVerne Cox.

Dunst stars in “On Becoming a God in Central Florida,” a dark comedy about a minimum-wage worker who schemes her way into a company that ruined her family. The 10-episode series, produced by Dunst, is set in the early 1990s.

Downey will host and narrate a series that explores the world of artificial intelligence through the perspectives of researchers and experts. The still-untitled series will look at the impact of A.I. and how it’s changing people’s lives and the change yet to come.

The 2019 debut dates for it and the other new series were not provided.

Octavia Spencer to star as hair-care mogul

Oscar-winning actress Octavia Spencer is bringing the story of black hair-care mogul Madam C.J. Walker to television.

Netflix said Sunday that Spencer will produce and star in a limited series about the outsized life of Sarah Breedlove, who was known professionally as Walker.

The eight-episode drama is based on the book “On Her Own Ground” and includes basketball star LeBron James as a producer. Walker became one of America’s first self-made female millionaires by creating and marketing hair products for African-Americans at the turn of the 20th century.

Netflix said the series will detail the hostility, rivalries and tumultuous personal life that marked Walker’s life.

A release date for “Madam C.J. Walker” was not announced.

Other news

■ The creator of the ABC comedy “black-ish” is leaving the network. Kenya Barris confirmed his departure from ABC Studios in an Instagram post July 27 in which he thanked those who had helped him and said he was “nervous but ready” for his next steps. “Black-ish” has earned multiple Emmy Awards nominations and praise for its politically relevant stories.

■ Bobby Brown says he made some bad choices in his life but denied that his marriage to Whitney Houston ever turned violent, a reversal of a past admission. Brown, speaking with reporters July 27 about BET’s new miniseries “The Bobby Brown Story,” said such allegations involving his late ex-wife were “completely wrong.” But in a 2016 interview with ABC’s Robin Roberts, Brown said he once hit Houston. He also told Roberts he is not “a violent man” and that descriptions of him as a “woman beater” are lies.

Next Star Wars to use unreleased footage of Fisher

From wire services

Carrie Fisher is not done with Star Wars after all — Lucasfilm says unreleased footage of the actress will be used in the next installment of the Star Wars saga to draw her character’s story to an end.

The studio and writer-director J.J. Abrams announced July 27 that footage of Fisher shot for 2015’s “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” will be used in the ninth film in the space opera’s core trilogies about the Skywalker family that includes Fisher’s character, Leia.

Filming is scheduled to begin Wednesday at London’s Pinewood Studios.

Mark Hamill, who plays Luke Skywalker, will also appear in the film, which for now is simply called “Episode IX.” It is scheduled to be released in December 2019.

Fisher died in December 2016 after she finished work on the middle installment in the trilogy, “The Last Jedi.” Director Rian Johnson opted not alter her storyline, leaving Leia’s fate to be handled by Abrams.

“We desperately loved Carrie Fisher,” Abrams said in a statement. “Finding a truly satisfying conclusion to the Skywalker saga without her eluded us.”

He said recasting Fisher or re-creating her using computer graphics were not considered viable options.

“With the support and blessing from her daughter, Billie, we have found a way to honor Carrie’s legacy and role as Leia in ‘Episode IX’ by using unseen footage we shot together in ‘Episode VII.’”

Fisher’s announcement was confirmed that Billy Dee Williams will be returning to the franchise as Lando Calrissian.

‘Mission: Impossible — Fallout’ shoots to No. 1 at box office

After six movies, 22 years, countless bruises and a broken ankle, Tom Cruise’s death-defying “Mission: Impossible” stunts continue to pay off at the box office. “Mission: Impossible — Fallout” easily took the No. 1 spot on the domestic charts this weekend, earning an estimated \$61.5 million in North America.

Not accounting for inflation, it’s a best for the long-running franchise, which has grossed \$2.8 billion worldwide, and one of Cruise’s biggest, too (just shy of “War of the Worlds” \$64.9 million debut in 2005). Internationally, the film earned \$92 million from 36 markets, also a franchise best.

Second place went to “Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again,” which earned \$15 million in its second weekend in theaters. Denzel Washington’s “The Equalizer 2” slid to third with \$14 million in weekend two, and “Hotel Transylvania 3: Summer Vacation” took fourth with \$12.3 million.

The animated “Teen Titans Go! To the Movies” was the only other major film to open, and took \$10.5 million for fifth place.

Netflix picks up ‘Mowgli’ in largest acquisition to date

Netflix has acquired the rights to Andy Serkis’ “Mowgli” from Warner Bros. in a deal that marks its biggest acquisition of a finished film to date.

Previously slated to hit theaters in October, Serkis’ live-action/special effects retelling of Rudyard Kipling’s “The Jungle Book” now will debut simultaneously on Netflix’s streaming platform and as a 3D theatrical release some time in 2019.

Serkis is making his directorial debut with the film, which follows director Jon Favreau’s 2016 live-action remake of “The Jungle Book.” Serkis takes a decidedly grittier approach to the story.

SHIFTING GEARS



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEXUS

Stretched Lexus RX 350L comes up short

By MARK PHELAN
Detroit Free Press

The 2018 Lexus RX 350L six- or seven-passenger SUV is an uncharacteristically half-hearted effort from Toyota's normally buttoned-down luxury brand.

Lexus' sterling reputation rests on a savage attention to detail. The brand's slogan was once "the relentless pursuit of perfection," but the stretched, three-row version of the brand's best-selling SUV feels more like the relentless pursuit of "meh."

Lexus dealers have been begging for a family-hauling SUV with three rows of seats for years. The lack of one ceded a significant piece of the luxury market to vehicles such as the Acura MDX, Audi Q7, Buick Enclave, GMC Acadia, Infiniti QX60 and Volvo XC90.

For reasons we may never know, Toyota's usually sharp product-planning department declined to develop an SUV to compete with these profitable models, leaving its dealers in the unenviable position of trying to talk buyers who wanted a sleek and carlike family wagon to buy the bigger, less fuel-efficient and more expensive truck-based LX 570.

When that failed, Lexus brass decided to add 4.3 inches of length and about 230 pounds and a row of seats to create the RX 350L.

If that were the best solution, other automakers would not go to the trouble and expense of developing all-new vehicles for their three-row SUVs. The result: Lexus got a compromised vehicle, but an attractive price.

Toyota engineers added 4 inches to the

rear of the regular model, RX 350, to create room for a small third row and changed the roof and tailgate to increase cargo space.

The lengthened 350L is new for the 2018 model year. The drive train is unchanged, except for being very slightly less powerful than the smaller, lighter 350. A 3.5L V-6 produces 290 hp and 263 pound-feet of torque in the L versus 295 and 267 in the five-seater. Gasoline-powered RXs get an eight-speed automatic transmission. Hy-

brids use a continuously variable transmission and a pair of electric motors to boost system power to 308 hp.

Outstanding features

The RX 350L's greatest strength is its cost, which is lower than that of many of its larger and roomier competitors. Modifying an existing vehicle costs less than developing an all new SUV with three rows, as all the competitors did.

It also has Lexus' usual premium materials and good interior fit and finish.

The RX is a quiet, comfortable vehicle for long trips or quick jaunts about town, as long as nobody's in the third row of seats. Those rear seats were raised and lowered by electric motors in my test car. The middle row slides fore and aft, increasing third-row legroom at the middle row's expense.

The RX's driver assistance features include adaptive cruise control, lane keeping assist, blind spot alert, collision alert with pedestrian detection and autonomous emergency braking.

The RX 350L AWD scored 18 mpg in city driving, 25 on the highway and 21 combined in EPA tests. The key combined rating is pretty much in the middle of its competitive set, trailing MDX, Q7 and XC90, matching the Q7 and topping the Acadia and Enclave.

The RX got its EPA score with regular gasoline, but needs premium to generate its rated horsepower. The drop-off using regular isn't likely to be enough for most drivers to notice, though. Performance isn't one of the top reasons anybody buys Lexus' popular SUV.

The downside

The third row of seats is the 350L's whole reason for existing, but legroom and headroom are severely limited. It's best reserved for small children or "maybe a 10-minute ride," to quote my 15-year-old and 5-foot-7 assistant, Owen.

The L's controls are outdated, with slow voice recognition for navigation and other features and a joy stick that's no picnic to use in a moving vehicle.

The verdict

Lexus dealers wanted a three-row SUV to keep loyal customers in the fold, but they'd better hope those customers are very loyal. Shoppers who compare the RX 350L's accommodations with vehicles engineered from the start to carry six or seven people are likely to go elsewhere.

Key features on vehicle tested

Standard equipment. Power sunroof; auto-dimming sideview mirrors; UV-reducing windows; power-folding third-row seats with 50/50 split; multizone climate control; power front seats; power tilt and telescoping steering wheel; USB ports in center console; pre-collision system with pedestrian detection; adaptive cruise control; automatic high beams; lane departure alert; and lane keep assist.

Options. Navigation; 12.3-inch display; 12-Speaker premium audio; blind spot alert; cross traffic alert; heated and ventilated front seats; and power tailgate.

2018 Lexus RX 350L



Reasons to buy: Price; three rows of seats; interior materials

Shortcomings: Third-row comfort; cargo space; controls

Vehicle type: All-wheel drive, seven-passenger luxury SUV

Price as tested: \$52,080 (excluding destination charge)

Powertrain: 3.5-liter 24-valve B-6

Transmission: Eight-speed automatic

Power/torque: 290 horsepower; 263 foot-pounds torque

EPA fuel economy rating: 18 mpg city/25 highway/21 combined

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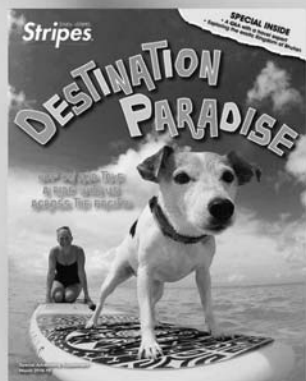
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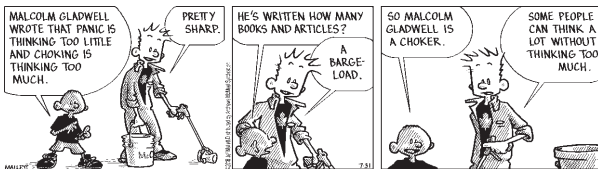
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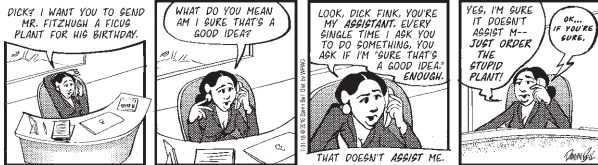
Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



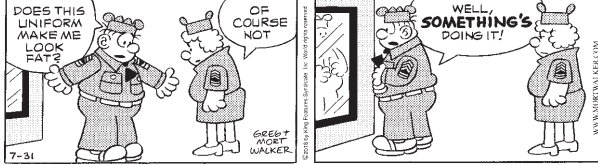
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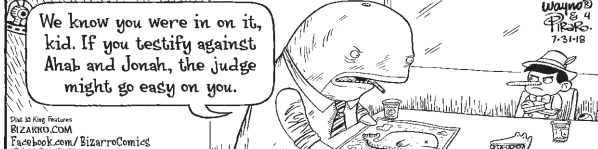
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
				18			19	20				
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25					26					27	28	29
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33				34					35			
				36				37				
38	39	40					41					
42					43	44				45	46	47
48					49				50			
51					52				53			

ACROSS

- Med. plan options
- U-boat, for one
- PC alternatives
- Lawman Wyatt
- budget
- Part of Q.E.D.
- Houston org.
- Moray, for one
- Soldier's knapsack
- Do the tango
- Pianist Peter
- "Amen!"
- Baseball's "Charlie Hustle"
- Work unit
- Nasty remarks
- Pledge
- Culinary herb
- Heal
- Car
- Pyle from Mayberry
- Group of priests
- Spider's home
- Sentry's cry
- Spring flower
- Beehive State
- Eg. and Syr., once
- Skater's leap
- Ms. Rowlands

DOWN

- That girl
- Chairman of China
- Hog haven
- Drench
- Saab model
- Really pests
- Prefix with surgeon
- Duck-billed critter
- Egg
- Achy
- Pitcher
- Overconfident
- Sultry singer Kitt
- Hooded snakes
- Jewel
- Guzzle
- Trusted teacher
- Overdue
- Flair
- Lean and supple
- Squealer
- Tic-tac-toe loser
- Salty expanse
- Caribou's kin

Answer to Previous Puzzle

J	A	M	A	R	U	B	A	G	E	L
O	A	R	N	O	T	E	S	A	R	E
T	H	I	N	K	T	A	N	K	N	I
S	U	B	L	E	T	S	N	A	P	
S	N	L	S	E	T	G	U	L	C	H
R	I	O	S	S	A	L	L	A	V	A
S	T	O	I	C	B	A	R	N	I	L
I	M	B	I	E	C	O	E			
B	O	A	A	N	N	E	F	R	A	N
E	O	N	O	N	E	D	E	E		
T	S	K	S	A	T	Y	R	Z	A	G

7-31

CRYPTOQUIP

VWCS ZOFWS JDB ECQQ C
IATGDM VWD GSDLAG SWA
UBAQ GBIIQJ UDT C GSACZ

AMFOMA? SWA EDCQ-LAAIAT.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TASK FOR SOMEBODY WHO MUST GO AND SELECT A SUITABLE FORTIFIED SPANISH WINE: SHERRY-PICKING.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals S

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Announcements 040

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Classifieds scams can target both sellers and buyers with classified advertisements.

Be aware of the common red flags.

Some of the latest Scam fads are:

- Vehicle buyers wanting to buy sight unseen and have the vehicle shipped through an agent using paypal.
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Automotive 140

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Announcements 040

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Deals

Sunday's transactions

BASEBALL
BALTIMORE ORIOLES — Assigned LHP Chris Lee outright to Bowie (EL).
BOSTON RED SOX — Placed 3B Rafael Devers on the 10-day DL. Recalled SS Tzu Wei Lin from Pawtucket (L).

CLEVELAND INDIANS — Placed OF Tyler Naquin on the 10-day DL, retroactive to July 26. Recalled RHP Adam Plutko from Columbus (L).

DETROIT TIGERS — Claimed LHP Josh Smoker off waivers from Pittsburgh and optioned him to Toledo (L).

HOUSTON ASTERS — Placed 2B Jose Altuve on the 10-day DL, retroactive to July 26. Optioned LHP Cionel Perez to Fresno (PCL). Recalled INF Tyler White from Frisco.

KANSAS CITY ROYALS — Optioned RHP Jacob deGrom outright to Omaha (PCL).
KANSAS CITY YANKEES — Traded LHP Cole Frazier to the Chicago White Sox for international signing bonus pool money.

LAKE CHARLES CATFISH — Placed OF Chad Pinder on the 10-day DL, retroactive to July 26. Recalled INF Franklin Barreto from Nashville (PCL).

LAS VEGAS RANGERS — Optioned RHP Casey Lawrence to Tacoma (PCL).
LAKE CHARLES CATFISH — Placed C Adam Moore outright to Durham (L).

TEXAS RANGERS — Sent RHP Chris Martin to Round Rock (PCL) for a rehab assignment.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS — Optioned OF Billy McKinney to Buffalo (L).

ARIZONA DIAMONDBACKS — Optioned SS Idemar Vargas to Reno (PCL).
BRAD PATER — Placed LHP Brad Pater on the 10-day DL, retroactive to July 26. Recalled RHP Brad Pater from the Frisco.

CHICAGO CUBS — Optioned RHP Cory Monteith outright to Louisville (L).

CINCINNATI REDS — Assigned LHP Kyle Lohr outright to Louisville (L).

COLORADO ROCKIES — Optioned OF Noel Cueva to Albuquerque (PCL). Recalled OF Guillermo from Albuquerque.

MILWAUKEE BREWERS — Signed OF Noel Cueva to Albuquerque (PCL). Recalled OF Guillermo from Albuquerque.

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Auto racing

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NASCAR Monster Cup Series

Sunday

At Pocono Raceway

Long Pond, Pa.

Lap length: 2.5 miles

(Start position in parentheses)

1. (28) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 164 laps, 0 rational points.

2. (1) Daniel Suarez, Toyota, 164, 0, 41.

3. (10) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 42.

4. (29) Kevin Harvick, Ford, 164, 0, 42.

5. (10) Justin Jones, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 42.

6. (38) William Byron, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 42.

7. (6) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 42.

8. (9) Ryan Newman, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 42.

9. (7) Kurt Busch, Ford, 164, 0, 31.

10. (2) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 164, 0, 31.

11. (31) Clint Bowyer, Ford, 164, 0, 39.

12. (3) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 164, 0, 28.

13. (37) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 28.

14. (14) AJ Allmendinger, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 28.

15. (8) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 164, 0, 28.

16. (13) Michael McDowell, Ford, 164, 0, 21.

17. (35) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 25.

18. (16) Matt Kenseth, Ford, 164, 0, 18.

19. (16) David Ragan, Ford, 164, 0, 18.

20. (35) Jamie McMurray, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 25.

21. (36) Paul Menard, Ford, 164, 0, 16.

22. (17) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Ford, 164, 0, 15.

23. (32) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 25.

24. (15) Tony Dill, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 13.

25. (34) Eric Mirowski, Ford, 164, 0, 13.

26. (3) Joey Logano, Ford, 164, 0, 13.

27. (18) Matt DiBenedetto, Ford, 164, 0, 13.

28. (30) JJ Yeley, Toyota, 164, 0, 0.

29. (13) Jeffery Earnhardt, Ford, 164, 0, 0.

30. (40) Casey Kahne, Chevrolet, 162, 0, 6.

31. (32) Kyle Weatherman, Chevrolet, 162, 0, 6.

32. (25) Reid Sorenson, Toyota, 161, 0, 6.

33. (39) Bubba Wallace, Chevrolet, accident, 153, 0, 4.

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6. (24) Sebastian Bourdais, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

7. (3) Ryan Hunter-Reay, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

8. (17) Simon Pagenaud, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

9. (7) Graham Rahal, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

10. (13) Marco Andretti, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

11. (16) Jordan King, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

12. (16) Jordan King, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

13. (18) Spencer Pigot, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

14. (10) James Hinchcliffe, Dallara-Honda, 90 laps, Running

15. (15) Charlie Kimball, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

16. (15) Tony Kanaan, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

17. (8) Takuma Sato, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

18. (21) Mathieu Leisl, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

19. (20) Jack Harvey, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

20. (21) Ben Bader, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

21. (23) Rene Binder, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

22. (14) Conor Daly, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

23. (12) Pato O'Reilly, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

24. (6) Max Chilton, Dallara-Honda, 89 laps, Running

25. (17) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Ford, 164, 0, 15.

26. (32) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 164, 0, 25.

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Golf

Senior British Open

Sunday

At The Old Course at St. Andrews

St. Andrews, Scotland

Yardage: 7,216; Par 72

1. M. Jimenez, \$33,380 68-67-72-69-72-72

2. L. Panzer, \$33,380 68-67-72-69-72-72

3. M. Jimenez, \$33,380 68-67-72-69-72-72

4. M. Jimenez, \$33,380 68-67-72-69-72-72

5. M. Jimenez, \$33,380 68-67-72-69-72-72

6. M. Jimenez, \$33,380 68-67-72-69-72-72

7. M. Jimenez, \$33,380 68-67-72-69-72-72

8. M. Jimenez, \$33,380 68-67-72-69-72-72

9. M. Jimenez, \$3

AUTO RACING

Another Big 3 victory

Kyle Busch wins sixth race of the season at Pocono

By DAN GELSTON
Associated Press

LONG POND, Pa. — Kyle Busch and his Joe Gibbs Racing team were in sync everywhere on the track but Victory Lane. When it was time to snap photos of the winners, some members flashed one finger, others held up six.

Yes, that's one for the win at Pocono Raceway and six for the total this season.

Busch then heard his name shouted from the top of the Richard Petty 200 Victory Circle. He craned his neck toward the section where the words were flanked by two images of Petty in his feathered Stetson hat and dark glasses.

Busch still has a long chase toward Petty on the Cup wins list but it hasn't kept the 33-year-old star from thinking about how far he can get.

"The top! Pretty simple," Busch said.

Busch had no one to bump him out of the lead this week and stormed from the bottom half of the field Sunday at Pocono Raceway on the way to his sixth NASCAR Cup victory of the season.

While champagne was sprayed on the podium, team owner Joe Gibbs was a safe distance from the party, a Super Bowl ring glistening on a finger he plugged into his ear to muffle the noise as he talked on the phone.

"Crazy, man. He's on a tear right now," he said to the other side.

The milestones kept piling up for Busch in a race where he matched Kevin Harvick for most wins this season.

Busch tied three-time champ Tony Stewart for 13th on the career wins list with 49.

"You keep reaching higher up the ladder and you keep reaching more milestone drivers," Busch said. "Tony Stewart is one of the all-time best and one of the drivers that I was a fan of growing up. It's awesome to be able to tie him. There's many more. We want to keep going."

Gibbs fielded cars for both Busch and Stewart and said both drivers were born to race.

"Very talented, driven, they want to go to the front," Gibbs said. "Both of them were real talented, that's for sure."

Busch, who won eight times in 2008, made it look easy at Pocono this weekend, with a win Saturday in the Truck Series race. He won for the 192nd time

over the Cup, Xfinity and Truck Series.

"How many can you get? I don't know. I'd like to think everything's achievable," Busch said.

He has Cup wins this year at Texas, Bristol, Richmond, Charlotte and Chicagoland. He hasn't gone more than three races without winning a race since April. Busch had never won at Pocono until July 2017. He's won 10 races since that date and led more than 2,000 laps.

The only quibble with all this success?

"I do have a trophy case problem," Busch said, laughing.

Busch was set to start second but his No. 18 Toyota was one of 13 cars dumped to the back of the pack for flunking post-qualifying inspection. The penalized cars included Harvick, who used a bump-and-go on the 18 with seven laps left last week at New Hampshire to knock Busch out of contention.

Oh well.

Much like the qualifying penalty, last week was just a minor afterthought.

Harvick's pole qualifying run also was tossed out but he led 30 laps and finished fourth.

The race was red flagged with six laps left in the wake of a violent wreck by Darrell Wallace Jr. Wallace lost the breaks in his No. 43 Chevrolet and the car shot across the grass and slammed into the wall. There were several tense seconds during a wait for Wallace to put down his window net. Once out, he sat on the track and slumped against the car before he taken to the track medical center.

When the race resumed, Busch zipped away and he surged ahead again on the final restart in overtime to add to the win total for NASCAR's Big Three: Busch, Harvick and Martin Truex Jr. have won 16 of the 21 Cup Series.

"What's crazy is, how this year keeps going," Busch said. "Harvick gets one, we get one, Truex gets one. We're all back and forth."

Busch held off a pair of young drivers aiming for their first career Cup win. Daniel Suarez, the first Mexican driver to win the pole for a Cup race, finished second and Alex Bowman was third.

There are just five races left before the 16-driver playoff field is set.

Only seven drivers have won races this season.

Harvick had a shot at his seventh win derail when the Ford was damaged on pit road and he slipped again to the back of the pack.



TOM E. PUSKAS/AP

Alexander Rossi leads the field through a corner at the start of the IndyCar Series race on Sunday at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Rossi runs away with IndyCar race

By CRAIG MERZ
Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ohio — Alexander Rossi took a gamble Sunday at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course that paid off with his second IndyCar victory of the season and fourth overall.

Starting from the pole and using a two-stop strategy while the rest of the field pitted three times, the 2016 Indianapolis 500 winner finished 12.8 seconds ahead of rookie Robert Wickens in the caution-free race on the 13.1-mile, 225.8-mile-per-hour road course. The race covered 90 laps and 202.3 miles.

"It was a little concerning at times," Rossi said. "Guys committed to doing it, but they bailed. [The strategy] worked."

"We didn't know how it would work. Without a warm-up we were not capable of knowing the fuel mileage you're getting."

Will Power was third, 14.7 seconds back. Josef Newgarden was fourth, and points leader Scott Dixon fifth.

"Maybe we should have thought of that," Power said about Rossi's strategy. "I don't know what my fuel number would have been."

Rossi also won the street race in Long Beach, Calif., in April. The victory Sunday was Andretti Autosport's 60th in the series.

Rossi had a 23-second lead over Wickens when he made his second pit stop on Lap 59. Wickens took the lead but, because he had been so far back when Rossi pitted it, was only a matter of time before he would fall behind again.

"We ran a good race today," Wickens said. "We were just unfortunate with the traffic. I got stuck behind (Takuma) Sato, we had to wait 10 to 15 laps to make a move. It was a frustrating stint."

Rossi got the lead for good when Wickens pitted on Lap 65 and Power temporarily moved to second. Rossi cruised from there and his only problem was trying to do a post-race doughnut in celebration only to get stuck in the grid.

He led 66 laps.

Dixon leads the series with 494 points, 46 more than Rossi. Newgarden, the defending champion is third, 60 points back.

Rossi led the first 30 laps until pitting, allowing Wickens to take the lead.

Notables: Local favorite and 2015 race winner Graham Rahal was ninth. Rookie Pietro Fittipaldi, in his first race since sustaining a compound fracture of his leg and a broken right ankle during qualifying in Belgium in early May, finished 23rd of 24 cars in the PaySafe Honda for Dale Coyne Racing. Jack Harvey, driving for Meyer Shank Racing from Pataskala, Ohio, a suburb of Columbus about 55 miles south of Lexington, placed 20th and Zach Vech from Stockdale, Ohio, was tenth for Andretti Autosport.

Mutual respect: Dixon made his 300th IndyCar start and Power his 200th on Sunday. Dixon was born in Australia but is a citizen of New Zealand, where good friend Power is from. Naturally there is a lot of bantering that goes on when it comes to sports such as soccer, rugby and cricket in those neighboring countries, although Dixon said the Kiwis dominate their counterparts in most competitions.

"He doesn't have much to fight for coming from Australia," he joked.

Power shrugs off barbs. "It's a friendly rivalry between New Zealand and Australia. Every time he sees me he flips me off. I do that back to him."

Dixon, by the way, has finished in the top five of half of his career starts.

Who's hot: Sebastian Bourdais started last after causing a red flag in qualifying Saturday but made up ground in a hurry to finish sixth. He led all drivers with 20 passes.

Who's not: Max Chilton seemed primed for a good race after running well and qualifying sixth. However, he made contact with Takuma Sato on Lap 2 and had to serve a drive-through penalty. Chilton never recovered and finished last, two laps off the pace.



DERIK HAMILTON/AP

Kyle Busch drives through Turn 3 during a NASCAR Cup Series race on Sunday in Long Pond, Pa.

NFL/SPORTS BRIEFS



MICHAEL CONROY/AP

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Andrew Luck throws during practice at the team's training camp in Westfield, Ind., Sunday.

Luck sore, tired but pain-free at camp

By MICHAEL MAROT
Associated Press

WESTFIELD, Ind. — Andrew Luck feels as sore and tired as he expected four days into training camp.

He's also pain free — just as the Indianapolis Colts hoped.

Luck passed his first practice by returning to the practice field, taking all of his normal snaps on the run rather than throwing at stationary targets while feeling good physically and mentally.

It's a good start for the quarterback with the surgically repaired right shoulder.

"Every day there will be new hurdles," he said Sunday. "The second day, things seemed to calm down or slow down a lot. The first day I was nervous. I was excited and there was a certain element of the unknown. I wasn't quite sure what was going to happen. It was also very fun to be out there with the guys and focus on getting better at practice and not just surviving practice."

The angst could be sensed all around the Colts' new camp site earlier this week in Westfield, Ind., a northern suburb of Indianapolis.

Fans roared throughout Thursday's opening workout, even cheering when Luck was throwing to ball boys and quarterbacks. One fan shouted "stay in that

pocket" as Luck went through an individual drill designed to help all four quarterbacks evade oncoming pass rushers.

Not surprisingly, the early jitters also impacted Luck's performance.

He was just 4-for-9 with an interception in his first 11-on-11 work since having a partially torn labrum fixed in January 2017.

On Friday, he was 15-for-19 overall.

He resumed throwing Sunday night, his first full practice in pads in nearly 20 months, and was 19-for-22 with two touchdowns in seven-on-seven and 11-on-11 drills.

"There have been four or five throws that have been like, 'Oh yeah, that looks 100 percent like normal,'" coach Frank Reich said before the evening workout. "Then there have been one or two that we just need to work through and continue to get better."

Luck did not talk with reporters after those practices or Saturday when he left the field about halfway through practice as scheduled.

"It's weird, but this is the plan Frank and I and (general manager) Chris (Ballard) and everybody who helped came up with at the start. I know it's helped me continue to get better and better," Luck said.

And Reich intends to hold him to that promise even though Luck is under no restrictions.

Briefly

Hail to 'honor' absent Owens

Associated Press

Despite his decision to not attend Saturday's Pro Football Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, Terrell Owens will be "honored" by the hall for his NFL career.

Hall President David Baker told The Associated Press on Monday that the Canton, Ohio, shrine's mission statement begins with the goal "to honor the heroes of the game."

So Owens, who instead will be making an appearance at the University of Chattanooga, where he played college football, will be part of the 2018 class exhibit that includes a glass locker for each new member; their pictures on the light standards of Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium; a role in opening videos shown within the stadium; and mention in any reference to the 2018 class.

Baker said NFL Network and ESPN, which both televise the induction, will show a video of Owens' career to the audience at home. That video will not be shown in the stadium.

"It's difficult he will not be here to put on the jacket, unveil his bust, make a speech, and attend the parade," Baker says. "For those things, there's nothing we can do."

Owens has cited the fact it took three years of eligibility for him to make the hall, claiming there were false representations of him as a teammate during the voting process. He also noted that no former players vote, ignoring that Hall of Famers James Lofton and Dan Fouts are among those on the committee.

The 44-year-old Owens had a mostly sensational 15-year career playing for San Francisco, Philadelphia, Dallas, Buffalo and Cincinnati. He is second to Jerry Rice in receiving yards and third in touchdown catches behind Rice and Randy Moss, who is entering the hall this week and will attend the festivities.

In other NFL news:

■ The Panthers suffered their second potentially significant training camp injury in three days as cornerback Ross Cockrell was carted off the field with a lower left leg injury.

Panthers coach Ron Rivera ended practice Monday immediately after Cockrell's injury. Rivera said he didn't want to speculate on the injury until trainers had time to evaluate Cockrell.

Cockrell was injured attempting to break up a pass in the end zone.

Several teammates openly grimaced and quickly looked away after checking on Cockrell, clearly distraught at what they saw.

■ Detroit Lions running back LeGarrette Blount returned to training camp a day after walking off the field during practice.

Blount declined interview requests Monday.

The Lions are counting on the 31-year-old Blount to help improve their running game, which has ranked among the NFL's worst in recent years.

He helped Philadelphia and New England win the past two Super Bowls. Blount ran for 1,927 yards and 20 touchdowns over the previous two seasons.

■ Pittsburgh Steelers starting left guard Ramon Foster's right knee injury isn't as bad as initially feared.

Foster was injured Saturday and left the team's first padded practice of training camp on a golf cart. Head coach Mike Tomlin said Sunday that Foster had his knee evaluated and the injury won't require surgery.

Tomlin offered no additional details on the injury or a timetable on Foster's recovery, but team president Art Rooney II said the Steelers are hopeful to have Foster back in time for the regular season.

Johnson wins RBC Canadian Open

OAKVILLE, Ontario — Top-ranked Dustin Johnson pulled away Sunday in the RBC Canadian Open for his third victory of the season and 19th on the PGA Tour.

Tied for third-round lead with Kevin Tway, Byeong Hun An and Whee Kim, Johnson shot a 6-under 66 for a three-stroke victory over Kim and An. Johnson finished at 23-under 265, winning at Glen Abbey after finishing second in 2013 and 2016 — and a week after missing the cut in the British Open.

"Even after the missed cut last week, I felt like I was hitting it fine," Johnson said. "I just did not score very well at Carnoustie at all. I didn't putt good. I just scored really badly. But I felt like I hit the ball plenty good enough to be under par after two days, and I was 5 over or something. It was just bad scoring."

He fell into place at Glen Abbey, the Jack Nicklaus-designed course slated for redevelopment.

"I needed to work on the putter though, which I did," Johnson said. "Started rolling the putter a lot better here this week. Really, really hit the ball well all four days."

Johnson also won at the Tournament of Champions at Kapalua in January and the FedEx St. Jude Classic in June in Memphis, Tenn.

Kim and An each shot 69 in the round interrupted by a nearly 2-hour lightning delay.

Neymar admits exaggerated reactions

SAO PAULO — Neymar used a sponsor's ad to admit he exaggerated some of his reactions after being fouled during the World Cup in Russia. The video, published Sunday and broadcast on several Brazilian TV networks, features the striker accepting criticism for the first time and promising to pick himself up.

The striker scored two goals in the tournament and was not too disappointing until his team got knocked out by Belgium in the quarter-finals, but fans and players have spoken much more about his theatrics on the pitch, which included dives, rolling and frequent arguing with referees.

"You may think I exaggerate. And sometimes I do exaggerate. But the truth is I suffer on the pitch," Neymar said in the ad sponsored by personal care products maker Gillette.



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X
EXCHANGE

JEVEX

MLB

Roundup

Happ solid in Yankees debut

Associated Press

NEW YORK — J.A. Happ had made eight previous starts at Yankee Stadium plus a relief appearance in the final game of the 2009 World Series. This was different.

"It was kind of weird looking down and seeing the pinstripes on me," he said, "but I'm happy to get used to it."

James Anthony Happ made the midseason impact the Yankees hoped for, pitching one-run ball for six innings to win his New York debut 6-3 over the Kansas City Royals on Sunday.

"It's a significant due to the rotation," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said in California surfer-speak, "that helps in not just the days he pitches, hopefully, but also just makes our staff and our bullpen as a whole a little bit better."

Three days after New York acquired the 35-year-old left-hander from Toronto for infielder Brandon Drury and outfield prospect Billy McKinney, Happ took a shutout into the fifth before Salvador Perez's opposite-field home run into the Yankees bullpen in right-center. Happ (11-6) allowed three hits, struck out two and walked one, and the first-time All-Star ended a four-start winless streak.

Happ had been 4-1 as a visitor in the Bronx. He threw four-seam fastballs on 64 of 96 pitches during the Royals, including his first 13 of the third inning. He mixed in 12 curveballs, seven sliders, two changeups plus 11 two-seam sinking fastballs — all from the third inning on.

"His fastball definitely gets on you, and he likes to pitch in on hitters," catcher Austin Romine

said. "It was weird. We almost felt like I caught him before, he was so much on the same page."

New York (67-37) won consecutive games for the first time since July 11-12 and remained 5½ games behind AL East-leading Boston. The Yankees sought a boost similar to the one provided by David Cone, who made his Yankees debut exactly 23 years earlier after his acquisition from Toronto and became a key cog in the team that reached that year's playoffs and won four World Series titles in the following five seasons.

Red Sox 3, Twins 0: Nathan Eovaldi pitched seven impressive innings in his first start with Boston. J.D. Martinez drove in all three runs to increase his major league-leading RBI total to 89 and host Boston beat Minnesota for their 18th victory in 22 games.

Cubs 5, Cardinals 2: Kyle Hendricks pitched seven sharp innings, Ben Zobrist had four hits and the visiting Cubs salvaged the finale of their weekend series.

Rangers 4, Astros 3: Jurickson Profar hit a go-ahead double deflected by the pitcher and stayed in despite getting kicked in the face as Texas became the first team to sweep host Houston this year.

It was 1-all in the sixth when Rougned Odor doubled and Profar hit a grounder nicked by Lance McCullers (10-6) that rolled into the outfield. Astros second baseman Yuli Gurriel lost his balance and kicked Profar in the cheek with his cleats as he slid into second base.

Rockies 3, Athletics 2: German Marquez continued Colorado's strong starting pitching. Tom Murphy homered and the host Rockies beat Oakland to sweep the interleague series.

Mets 1, Pirates 0: Zack Wheeler pitched six strong innings and drove in the lone run, leading New York over host Pittsburgh.

Indians 8, Tigers 1: Yonder Alonso, Melky Cabrera and Edwin Encarnacion all homered for Cleveland, and Corey Kluber pitched into the eighth inning in a victory over host Detroit.

Orioles 11, Rays 5: Adam Jones had three hits and an RBI in what could be his final game with the Orioles, and host Baltimore got a rare series win.

Giants 8, Brewers 5: Buster Posey had four hits, including a three-run double to help San Francisco break out of a collective funk, and the host Giants avoided a four-game sweep.

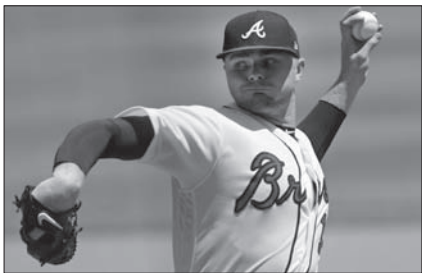
Reds 4, Phillies 0: Luis Castillo allowed four hits in a season-high seven innings, Scooter Gennett hit a two-run homer and host Cincinnati wrapped up its long homestand with a third consecutive win over Philadelphia.

Blue Jays 7, White Sox 4: Brandon Drury hit a go-ahead, two-run double in a five-run ninth inning and Toronto beat host Chicago.

Marlins 5, Nationals 0: Jose Urena and three relievers combined on a two-hitter for host Miami in a win over Washington to split a four-game series.

Mariners 8, Angels 5: Mike Zunino had a two-run double in a seven-run first inning and Marco Gonzales (12-5) went six strong innings to help visiting Seattle beat Los Angeles.

Diamondbacks 5, Padres 4: Paul Goldschmidt and Nick Ahmed each hit a two-run homer and A.J. Pollock also connected for visiting Arizona, which held on to beat San Diego for a three-



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Braves starting pitcher Sean Newcomb came within one strike of pitching the team's first no-hitter since 1994 on Sunday against the Dodgers in Atlanta. The Braves won 4-1.

Newcomb nearly throws no-hitter

Braves ace then apologizes for old tweets

By GEORGE HENRY
Associated Press

ATLANTA — Sean Newcomb thought his near no-hitter would be the story of the day.

Then he picked up his phone. Newcomb said he had forgotten about racist, homophobic and sexist tweets he sent as a teenager, but was quickly reminded a few minutes after speaking with the media about the Atlanta Braves' 4-1 win Sunday over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

After seeing that he had been called out, the 25-year-old Newcomb said it was his idea to bring reporters back to the clubhouse so he could address the issue before he went home.

The old tweets overshadowed his career-best moment.

"This is something obviously that can't be happening," he said. "I feel bad about it. I don't mean to offend anybody. It was six, seven years ago. I didn't mean anything by it and I definitely regret it, for sure."

Newcomb came within one strike of pitching the first no-hitter by the Braves since 1994, denied when Chris Taylor sharply singled with two outs in the ninth inning.

"It was happy to get to that point and annoyed it was just a ground-ball through the hole," Newcomb said. "In hindsight, you'd like to throw a different pitch or something, but I will just take that and go forward."

Newcomb had a 2-2 count when Taylor hit a hard groundover beyond the reach of diving third baseman Johan Camargo. That came on the career-high 134th and final pitch by the lefty.

"I was crushed," Braves catcher Kurt Suzuki said. "It felt like we lost, like that was a walk-off hit, but it happens. We were really close."

Newcomb (10-5) exited to a thunderous standing ovation from

the sellout crowd at SunTrust Park as manager Brian Snitker removed him. Snitker took the ball and gave it back to Newcomb as a keepsake — instead, Newcomb simply tossed it toward the Atlanta dugout as he walked off, wanting no souvenir of the near-miss.

Kent Mercker was the last Atlanta pitcher to throw a no-hitter, doing it 24 years ago at Dodger Stadium. There have been three no-hitters in the majors this year.

Less than an hour later, Newcomb was talking about his offensive tweets.

"I just wanted to apologize for any insensitive material," he said. "It was a long time ago, six or seven years ago, saying some stupid stuff with friends."

Major League Baseball dealt with a similar situation this month involving Milwaukee Brewers reliever Josh Hader on the night he pitched in the All-Star Game.

"Such inappropriate comments have no place in our game," MLB said in a statement. "We are aware of this serious issue ... we will identify an appropriate course of diversity training for him in the Atlanta community."

In a statement posted on Twitter, the Braves said they had spoken to Newcomb, calling him "incredibly remorseful."

"We find the tweets hurtful and incredibly disappointing and even though he was 18 or 19 years old when posted, it doesn't make them any less tolerable. We will work together with Sean towards mending the wounds created in our community," the team said.

Newcomb struck out eight and walked one against the NL West leaders. He retired the first 15 batters before walking Yasiel Puig to begin the sixth, and that was the only runner Newcomb permitted until the ninth.

Dan Winkler relieved Newcomb and gave up Manny Machado's RBI single before ending it on Matt Kemp's groundout.



DAVID J. PHILLIPS/AP

Astros second baseman Yuli Gurriel, right, steps on the face of the Rangers' Jurickson Profar as he slides into second base after hitting an RBI double during the sixth inning Sunday in Houston.

MLB

Commentary

Expect Rivera, Jeter to set crowd records

By ANTHONY RIEBER
Newsday

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y.

Once the field at the Clark Sports Center was cleared and the 50,000 or so folding chairs were put away after Sunday's induction ceremonies, this tiny village started the process of closing the books on another fantastic Hall of Fame weekend.

Fifty thousand is the Hall of Fame's estimate of the weekend's crowd to see six players added to the ranks of baseball immortals. Locals still talk about the largest crowd ever, the 82,000 who jammed into baseball's mythical birthplace in 2007 to see Cal Ripken Jr. and Tony Gwynn's inductions.

Something tells us Cooperstown ain't seen nothing yet. Next year, Mariano Rivera should make the Hall.

In 2020: Derek Jeter.

"I'm scared of 2020," said Tim Haney, owner of Cooperstown Bat Company on picturesque Main Street, just a short pop fly from the Hall.

This weekend, fans of the Braves turned out to see Chipper Jones get in. Indians fans were here to honor Jim Thome. Tigers fans got a two-fer with Jack Morris and Alan Trammell making it. Expos fans came to see Vladimir Guerrero's induction and complained in French and English that he went in wearing an Angels cap on his plaque (a bad cap call, it says here, since Guerrero's best and most memorable work was done north of the border).

There was even a sizable contingent from San Diego to honor Trevor Hoffman, who was baseball's all-time saves leader before Rivera shattered that record in 2011.

Rivera is the biggest first-timer on the ballot for 2019. He most likely will be joined on the stage by Edgar Martinez, who should make it over the finish line in his 10th and final year of eligibility on the writers' ballot after getting 70.4 percent of the vote in 2018 (75 percent is needed for enshrinement).

Other first-timers on the ballot include Andy Pettitte and the late Roy Halladay. Only Rivera is a lock among the rookies.

Here are Rivera's numbers in the post-season: 96 appearances, 8-1 record, 0.70 ERA, 42 saves. Five rings. Game over.

"Do you think relievers belong in the Hall of Fame?" a fan asked me the other day.

The question not only seemed from another time, but from another planet. If Rivera isn't a Hall of Famer then there's no reason to have the place.

Another lock? That Yankees fans will turn out in droves next July 21 to see Mariano get in. And the crowd for Jeter 2020 will be absolutely bonkers and will stretch the resources of this town of 1,800 like never before.

"It'll definitely handle it and it'll do a great job doing it," said Haney, who has owned the bat business here since 1993. "But Ripken, we were parking cars in farmers' fields like way outside of town. I mean like way outside of town. It was unbelievable."



JULIE JACOBSON/AP

Former Yankee Derek Jeter is expected to be a lock for the 2020 Hall of Fame.

Again, about the Jeter year: If you look at the list of other possible first-timers (Paul Konerko? Jason Giambi? Marco Scutaro?) and the expected holdovers, it's possible Jeter will stand alone on the stage in 2020.

Something tells us he would like that. No player, not even Babe Ruth, has ever gotten 100 percent of the vote, which is ridiculous and a stain on the writers' part in this Hall of Fame election process. Jeter probably won't either, but it will be a topic leading into that vote.

As will the expected crowds for the next two years. Cooperstown residents are al-

ready bracing for two of the biggest parties this town has seen since Abner Doubleday invented the game here in 1839. (He didn't, but that's OK. It's a nice story.)

Some residents will no doubt flee and rent out their houses to the Yankees fan horde. Seems like a pretty good, and lucrative, idea.

"Not everybody from Cooperstown is a baseball fan, unfortunately," Haney said.

"They all deal with it. But this is glorious for me. I love baseball and I love the fact that all these people are here."

Good. Get ready for a lot more.

Class: Thome marvels at journey; Guerrero delivers speech in Spanish

FROM BACK PAGE

Thome marveled that the genesis of this moment was hitting rocks on a gravel driveway with an aluminum bat as a kid.

"It's been my great privilege to have played the game for as long as I did," he said. "And I can say this with certainty: The possibilities are just as important as the outcome. Living the dream that is major league baseball, the best part is not the result but taking the journey with the people whose contributions make it all possible."

"I'm so honored to be part of something so special. Baseball is beautiful, and I am forever in its service."

Greeted by hundreds of fans waving Dominican Republic flags, Guerrero spoke in his native Spanish in a speech that was translated from Spanish and lasted just five minutes. He thanked his father and mother, who cooked dinners for him and does the same now for his son, and the fans and the people in his hometown of Don Gregorio. His son Vladimir Jr., the top prospect in the minor leagues with the Blue Jays, was in attendance.

The mid-time All-Star outfielder batted .318 with 449 homers and 1,496 RBIs and is the first



HANS PENNING/AP

Miguel Guerrero, left, and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. watch their father, Vladimir Guerrero, speak during Sunday's National Baseball Hall of Fame inductions in Cooperstown, N.Y.

player inducted wearing the cap of the Angels, the team where he enjoyed his greatest success.

Just as he did in his unflappable role in the bullpen during his career as an ace reliever, Hoffman was flawless in delivering his speech, also closing it by thanking his wife, Tracy.

"You shared with me this amazing journey of ups and downs from the beginning, always never letting me get too high or get too low," Hoffman said. "I love you."

Hoffman played the bulk of his career with the San Diego Padres before finishing with the Milwaukee Brewers. After failing to impress in three years as a shortstop, he switched to the bullpen and became a star. Using a stultifying change-up, Hoffman recorded 601 saves over 18 seasons, second all-time to former Yankees star Mariano Rivera's 652.

He also credited his parents for his success.

"Mom, dad, you're the biggest

reason I'm on this stage," Hoffman said. "In fact, you're all of my reasons. Not a day goes by that I'm not thankful for all both of you have done. I love you both beyond words."

Morris, now 63, spent 15 years on the ballot before getting the call last December. Known for his toughness on the mound, he pitched 18 seasons for the Tigers, Twins, Blue Jays and Indians, and played on four World Series champions. The crowning achievement of his career was his 1-0, 10-inning complete-game victory in Game 7 of the 1991 World Series while pitching for his hometown Twins against the Braves.

Among those he thanked were his dad and his late mother and the late Sparky Anderson, who managed the Tigers to the 1984 World Series championship.

"Thank you mom and dad for everything you taught me and have done for me," Morris said, his voice cracking with emotion as he looked at his dad. "Mom, I know you're smiling down on us today. Dad, thank you for instilling in me the work ethic that was so vital to my success, but more than that you showed equal love for all your children."

"I know Sparky Anderson is with us here today," Morris

added. "He taught me so many things, especially to respect this great game. He taught me a valuable lesson by allowing me to fail and fight through adversity."

Trammell, who played shortstop for 20 seasons — all for the Tigers — and Morris were selected together by a veterans committee, which made the day extra special for the Motor City.

"We signed together in 1976, spent 13 years together in Detroit, and now 42 years later, Cooperstown. Wow!" Morris said.

Trammell earned six All-Star Game selections, four Gold Glove Awards and three Silver Slugger Awards. His .977 fielding percentage ranks sixth among shortstops with at least 2,000 games played. During his tenure, the Tigers had one of the great double play combinations in MLB history in Trammell and second baseman Lou Whitaker, who was in the audience.

"For 19 years Lou Whitaker and I formed the longest running double play combination in the history of baseball," Trammell said, recalling the two were called up to the Tigers on the same day. "Lou, it was an honor and a pleasure to have played alongside you all those years. I hope someday you'll be up here, too."

MLB

More old tweets lead to more apologies

Trend touches many young athletes, who have been online since they were kids

By CLIFF BRUNT
Associated Press

As major leaguers Trea Turner, Sean Newcomb and Josh Hader face up to racist and homophobic tweets they sent as teenagers, publicist Lauren Walsh recalls how she dealt with a football player who had offensive Facebook posts years before he prepared for the NFL draft.

She went through his whole social media history, taking down any posts that even raised an eyebrow.

Scrubbing tweets, Instagram posts and other comments, captions and status updates has grown into a top priority for LW Branding, Walsh's company that has helped 40 NFL athletes with image control in the past 3½ years.

"Any client that we take on, that's generally the first step we do in the process," Walsh said. "This can take someone down in an instant. All it takes is one tweet. Now, he's going to be known for this. This is what people are talking about."

Turner and Newcomb are the latest high-profile athletes burned by reckless posts from years past. The 25-year-old Newcomb nearly threw a no-hitter for the Braves against the Dodgers on Sunday — a career defining moment that took a turn when he called reporters back into the clubhouse to apologize for offensive tweets sent in 2011 and 2012, when he was 18.

Homophobic and racially insensitive tweets by Turner from 2011 and 2012 surfaced Sunday night. The 25-year-old Turner, a shortstop for the Washington Nationals, apologized in a statement released by the team.

"I believe people who know me understand those regrettable actions do not reflect my values or who I am," Turner said. "But I understand the hurtful nature of such language and am sorry to have brought any negative light to the Nationals organization, myself or the game I love."

Hader, who pitches for the Milwaukee Brewers, is still in apology mode after tweets from his past surfaced during the All-Star Game this month. He was given a standing ovation in his first game back in Milwaukee, and then booed when the Brewers made their first road trip of the second half of the season in San Francisco.

The trend touches many young athletes, with millions of posts from thousands of players who have been online since they were kids.

Former Wyoming quarterback Josh Allen apologized for a series of offensive tweets he sent while in high school that were revealed right before the NFL Draft, when the Buffalo Bills selected him seventh overall. As Villanova's Dante DiVincenzo was celebrating being named most outstanding player of the Final Four, some of his old tweets that included racially insensitive and homophobic comments made headlines.

"This stuff happens all the time and it happens when they get their shining moment," Walsh said. "When all of us were 17, we weren't thinking about where we were going to be in our lives seven years down the road."

But athletes should start thinking about the bigger picture, as damage from slip-ups can be critical to coaches and executives, Walsh said.

The mistakes by Turner, Hader and Newcomb will be discussed by athletic departments, professional teams, agents and handlers looking to protect themselves and



JOHN BAZEMORE/AP

Braves' pitcher Sean Newcomb sits on the bench after losing his bid for a no-hitter in the ninth inning on Sunday. But instead of basking in that achievement, Newcomb had to apologize for old racist, homophobic and sexist tweets he sent as a teenager.



WILFREDO LEE/AP

Washington Nationals shortstop Trea Turner, left, and Braves pitcher Sean Newcomb are the latest high-profile athletes burned by reckless posts from years past.

'This stuff happens all the time and it happens when they get their shining moment. When all of us were 17, we weren't thinking about where we were going to be in our lives seven years down the road.'

Lauren Walsh

publicist that has helped 40 NFL athletes with image control

their players. As higher-ups grow more aware of the damage social media mishaps can cause, vetting could become more rigid as a key part of evaluating a multimillion-dollar investment.

"In light of recent events, that's definitely something our staff will discuss to potentially eliminate the chance of a negative situation that puts a student-athlete in a bad light," said Creighton spokesman Rob

Anderson, who said he doesn't know of any staffer going through a player's entire social media history.

Varsity Monitor keeps up with social media and offers education programs for 15 Division I schools, including North Carolina, Texas and Florida. Chief executive Joe Purvis said business is at an all-time high since 2010, with sales doubling in the past year.

It's not just athletes who should be wary of their past mistakes, Purvis said.

"Sports recruiters and normal employment recruiters are now looking at social media profiles as well as résumés as a standard of that person's character," he said. "If your social profiles have negative posts, they will assume you are negative."

"We've stopped recruiting someone based on what kind of person he is after coaches had chances to assess everything in their life, including social media," said Georgia Southern spokesman Bryan Johnston.

Most schools designate a member of each team's coaching staff to monitor the social media channels of athletes. But the sheer volume of several hundred athletes per school makes it nearly impossible to keep up with everything.

Many schools have presentations early in the school year to educate students about the importance of being smart about social media. North Carolina brings in Derrick Mayes, a former NFL player and co-founder of 5.0 Communications, for "scared straight" seminars to athletes.

"When the reputation of your university, of your program is judged by what a teenager is doing on social media, the more that you can do to try to minimize those surprises, the better for everybody," North Carolina spokesman Steve Kirschner said.

Walsh suggests athletes and average Joes alike scrub their accounts once a year like a spring cleaning, leaving nothing to chance. And to use social media in a positive way.

"Be authentic," she said. "Define your brand and values. And then, you put out your content."

Even better to make smart decisions to begin with so there's no situation to fix, said Purdue spokesman Tom Schott.

"Once you put it out there, regardless of what you think you've deleted, it's probably going to be out there in some form or fashion," he said.

SPORTS



Nearly a no-no
Braves' Newcomb 1 strike short,
apologizes for tweets » **Page 29**

BASEBALL HALL OF FAME



HANS PENNING/AP

Members of the 2018 Baseball Hall of Fame class, from left, Vladimir Guerrero, Trevor Hoffman, Chipper Jones, Jack Morris, Alan Trammell, and Jim Thome, hold their plaques after an induction ceremony on Sunday in Cooperstown, N.Y.

CLASS ACTS

Emotional Jones leads 2018 inductees into Cooperstown

By JOHN KEKIS
Associated Press

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Chipper Jones didn't bow to the pressure of the moment, and it was considerable.

Jones was inducted Sunday into the Baseball Hall of Fame, and he stood there delivering his speech with wife Taylor staring up at him, hours away from giving birth to a son to be named Cooper in honor of the special day.

Faced with that daunting task, Jones delivered flawlessly, just as he did during a 19-year career with the Atlanta Braves.

"She changed my life forever," Jones said as his wife brushed away tears. "It took me 40 years and some major imperfections in me along the way to find my true profession. Now we've taken our two families and blended them together. It has

'Baseball is beautiful, and I am forever in its service.'

Jim Thome
Hall of Famer

given me what I've been searching for my entire life — true happiness."

A crowd estimated at about 50,000 gathered on a sun-splashed day to honor six former players. Also enshrined were Jim Thome, Vladimir Guerrero, Trevor Hoffman and former Detroit Tigers teammates Jack Morris and Alan Trammell.

Jones controlled his emotions in a speech that took the crowd through his entire career, starting with his rookie season when he helped lead the Braves to the 1995 World Series title. He was one of the great-

est switch-hitters in baseball history, in the mold of his dad's favorite player, Mickey Mantle, and finished with a .303 career batting average, 468 home runs, and 1,623 RBIs, credentials that earned him election on the first try.

Jones also heaped praise on his mom and dad — "You're the reason I'm on this stage," he said — and ended his speech by thanking the loyal Atlanta fans.

"You stuck by me," he said. "You're the reason I never want to play anywhere else. I love you guys. Thank you."

Emotional during a Hall of Fame visit in February to tour the museum in preparation for this day, Thome held it together despite having to wipe away tears after his daughter Lila sang the national anthem. Like Jones, he heaped praise on his wife, Andrea.

"Obviously, induction into the Hall of Fame is one of the greatest honors of my life," Thome said. "The best thing, though, that's ever happened to me is the day you agreed to marry me. You are without a doubt the best teammate I could ever have and, with the world as my witness, I love you more today than ever."

The lefty-swinging Thome hit 612 home runs, eighth all-time, and had an MLB record 13 walk-off homers, mostly for the Cleveland Indians.

SEE CLASS ON PAGE 30

Busch earns sixth victory of season » Auto racing, Page 26

